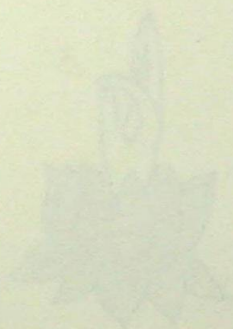


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Portraits
Thirty Three
Eminent Disciples
of
The Buddha

By
C. de Sarani

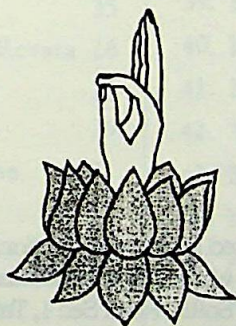


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Pen Portraits
Ninety Three
Eminent Disciples
of
The Buddha

By
C. de Saram



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Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala
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FOREWORD

Through all the vicissitudes of their chequered history, there are two priceless possessions, which the Sinhalese have preserved intact at all times. These are their Religion and Nationality. For preserving these great boons, they are immeasurably indebted to the Mahā-Saṅgha, the Noble Order of the Bhikkhus. From whence is their inspiration. There can be no doubt that apart from the Doctrine itself, the Saṅgha of those ages were greatly inspired by the lives of the Mahā-Arahats authoritatively recorded in various texts such as the Thera - Gāthā, Therī - Gāthā and Manorathapūraṇi, the commentary to Anguttaranikāya. In later times, Ratmalāne Siri Piyaratana Mahāthera has collected these stories and systematically arranged them in Sinhala under the title "Śrāvaka Śrāvika Caritaya".

As Mr. C. de Saram states elsewhere, the material for his book is mainly derived from the last named treatise of Ven. Piyaratana Mahāthera. It is no easy task to translate a Sinhala text without damaging its delicacy and realistic touches. With his consummate knowledge of both languages, Mr. de Saram has succeeded in a remarkable manner in presenting to the English speaking world a readable text. His own piety and the indefatigable study of the vast field of Buddhist literature is vividly seen through the pages of this Book. May the same spirit inspire the reader to derive in full measure the benefit thereof.

Through the help of the merit which the author has acquired in publishing this Book, May He Attain Nibbāna!

Mirisso Gunasiri Thera

PREFACE

An outline of the lives of the Arahants is chiefly an effort of translation. To make it possible for the English speaking readers to have a glimpse of their lives is the aim of the author. The source of material for this book is mainly derived from the "Sravaka Sravika carita" or the biography of the male and female Arahants of the Noble Order by Venerable Kirielle Gnanavimala Stavira who was the editor of the self same book by Ratmalane Sri Piyaratna Maha thera the author who was responsible for the book.

The role of a translator chiefly lies in interpreting. He takes the essence in one language and expresses it in the garb of another.

Interpreters are not to be envied. There will be several schools of thought. Experts of one language may not be the same for another or vice versa. Not only the form that matters but also the spirit. How far this is achieved is the measure of success of this book. The reader is taken to another world. The world in which the Buddha and His illustrious disciples lived is far different from the world of ours. One must realise a world sans trains, automobiles and aeroplanes making a hideous din. Neither electricity nor wireless has left its mark. There was an unusual flowering of the human tree in the fifth century BC. The medda-desa in India provided the most brilliant flower—the Buddha.

In this process, there are bound to be faults and the author's attempt is the first of its kind. He craves the indulgence of the reader for any act of omission or commission on his part. His love for the Dispensation of the Beessed One is alone responsible for this effort.

Lives 26 and 67 have, for obvious reasons, exceeded their usual bounds.

Mr. George Abeywardene of "Abeyapura" Dehiwala first struck a match to kindle this light. It was he who inspired me to write.

To Venerable Mirisse Gunasiri my deepest gratitude is due. He not only encouraged me by precept and example, but also consented to write a foreword.

Among others who assisted me special mention must be made of Mr. K. M. U. Jayaratne of the Commerce Ministry of Ceylon. But for the inspiring and indefatigable efforts on the part of Mr. Gunapala Ranasinghe of the Ceylon Readers Bookshop of Colombo, the publication of the book would not have been possible.

I have to thank Messrs Swadeshi Printers for doing an excellent job under trying circumstances in a straight forward manner.

C. de Saram

"KANTHAKA"

6, Lauries Lane,

Colombo 4, (Ceylon)

24th February, 1971,

HOMAGE TO THE TRIPLE GEM

The Lord, the Doctrine and the Order;
In silent homage, we wonder
At the peerless and priceless gem,
Men seek undying bliss at thy helm.

For a vast and countless stretch of Time
Since thou, Oh Great Being took thy rise;
Under Deepankhara most kind,
Foregoing bliss to serve mankind.

Parami perfecting in lives countless
Maya and Suddodan to bless,
At Lumbini on Wesak morn
The mighty Prince was born.

Leaving royal pomp wife and son,
After six long years He won
At Gaya, Release of the mind,
Battling through pain of every kind.

As the earth lies all before Him;
He saw man going through every whim;
Steeped in Ignorance and Greed,
Self was the centre of their creed.

Alara and Udakkha He knew
Fit to grasp the Doctrine new;
Alas, they have left the scene;
At deer park the Five were seen.

They were wedded to abstinence
As the road to Deliverance.
Return of Prince whom they lost sight
Was a pointer that they were right.

They decided on no reception;
But a seat due to His station;
When He arrived they all arose
They welcomed the visitor home.

The Sun was setting on the West.
The Esala moon shone on the East.
To a hushed world the Lord spoke;
From the slumbers the earth awoke.

Kondanna had a fleeting look;
A deeper view the Dewas took.
The world was electrified
As the Light the darkness defied.

"The world was begirt with Sorrow
Sorrowless state was no less thorough"
To the intrepid Few Path is clear
As they travel to bainsh Fear.

The world whether old or modern
To cure ills was its true concern.
The Four Great Truths beckon man
The horrid prison to open.

The Creator of man was Greed,
For countless lives this was his food.
Ignorance at its helm it grows
No end for it until he Knows.

Buddha shared with Five the Light
To put soul and its brood to flight.
Two Chiefs and the noble array
Kondanna was leading the Way.

The Light of Dhamma was shed
For five and forty Suns He led.
At Kusinagara Light sped
With war cry seldom or since heard.

"Men and matters do not prevail,
Nothing is of any avail.
Be earnest in your efforts
To wrest Aryan Fruits".

Devoid of Greed Ignorance and Hate,
Like lotus from the muddy lake;
Richer field hard to find
For rare harvest to mankind.

As we survey the heroic men
Holy Men come to the open.
Sakkyamuni's Inmost Circle
To preach the best Vehicle.

Law was Ananda's theme,
For Code Upali was supreme.
Holy Kassapa at helm
Lingering doubts to overwhelm.

We salute the Noble Order
We revere Them in order,
A lode star as the ideal,
Each points to man as real.

INTRODUCTION

'Universal history' says Carlyle, 'the history of what man has accomplished in the world, is at bottom, the history of Great Men who have worked here.'

The history of Buddhism is, in the main, the biography of the lives of 'Arya Sangha' or 'Arya Puggala'. Their conversion occupies a most prominent part in the life of the Buddha. The Dispensation of the Buddha rested on four main pillars. The male and female Disciples who constitute the Sangha and the male and female lay disciples who comprise the laity. For today the Order of the Bhikkhunis has ceased to count. Buddhism comprises the Doctrine, the Practice and the Fruits of such practice.

The last is the theme of this book. The Eighty Maha Arahants and the thirteen Maha Theri Arahants have by their efforts won emancipation of a rare distinction. They belong to the inmost circle of Gautama Buddha.

The Buddha and the Maha Arahants go together at all times. These lives portray heroic endeavour. In this scientific age in which man has advanced by leaps and bounds into the realm of matter, we are apt to forget the spiritual triumphs of the mind.

The Buddha has taught us that each being whether man or animal comprises of five aggregates or 'khandas' which merely means heap or accumulation. One such aggregate being the body (rupa) and the four others relate to the mind (nama).

If a being can be compared to an iceberg fourfifths of which is immersed in water and the rest is visible, even so the body is visible while the mind is invisible. It is for this reason worldlings or 'puthujjana' are drawn towards the body superficially attractive but substantially repulsive. They are apt to forget that it is the mind that matters.

It is necessary, therefore, to survey the lives of Great Men who by their example were able to inspire others. Unlike some scientists who are credited with the discovery of the nuclear bomb, these followers of the Noble Order have left their records, so that we who read them may have an heroic mould to shape our lives. They are Men and Women charged with a mission.

When the Light of the World was about to pass away at Kusināra, a Brahmin by the name of Subhādda wished to obtain audience with the Blessed One. Venerable Ananda was unwilling to admit the visitor lest he would weary the Master in His last moments. A conversation thus ensued. The Buddha on hearing the purport of the mission, requested Ananda to admit the visitor.

Subhādda asked the Master what system of religion is true, seeing there were 62 opposing schools of thought prevailing and six pseudo teachers living at the time. The Buddha's answer is illuminating.

In whatever religious system you would find, Oh Subhādda, the Aryan Eightfold Path and the four pairs of Ariya Puggala namely Sotāpanna, Sakadagāmi, Anagāmi and Arahant each in the Path and Fruition (Magga and Phāla respectively), that system of religion is true. Subhadda was the last convert.

As a duck takes to water, every aspirant to Arahantship practises the virtues called *Paramitas*. They are so called because their practice leads to Nibbana. The Pali terms have a wealth of meaning, lacking in their English equivalents;

(1) *Dāna* or generosity (2) *Sīla* or virtue (3) *Nekhammas* or renunciation (4) *Pañña* or wisdom (5) *Vīriya* or effort (6) *Khanti* or patience (7) *Sacca* or truth (8) *Adhitthana* or determination (9) *Mettā* or loving kindness (10) *Upekkhā* or equanimity.

Every Arahant whether he be a Chief Disciple or Pacceka Buddha or Samma Sambuddha has to practise these virtues one and all. These *Paramitas* are threefold; *Paramitas* pure and simple, *Upa Paramitas* and *Paramattha Paramitas*. For example if you part with property to some one else it is *Dana parami*. If you donate an eye to another to obtain eye sight, or if you donate blood to let another survive, it is *dana upa parami*. If some one were to sacrifice his life to let another survive, as in the classic story of a Buddha's previous life, when he saw from the top of a cliff that a starving tigress was about to devour her new born ones, He did not hesitate but flung Himself as a sacrifice to the tigress. It is the highest, it is *dāna Paramattha Parami*. Similarly the remaining nine *Paramitas* could be practised. The period taken and the intensity of practice constitute the measure of their greatness.

A lakh of kalpas was the training period of a Maha Arahant. A period of one hundred years is but a mere speck compared to one kalpa. A Samma Sambuddha takes at least four aeons and one hundred thousand kalpas. A Pacceka Buddha takes at least two aeons and one hundred thousand kalpas. A Chief Disciple takes one aeon and one hundred thousand kalpas.

A true conqueror is the person who transcends earthly ties. They are ten in number and are called *Sanyojana*. They are (1) personality belief (*Sakkaya ditti*) (2) Sceptical doubt (*vicikiccha*) (3) clinging to vain rites and ceremonies (*silabbata-paramasa*) (4) sensuous craving (*kāma-rāga*) (5) illwill (*vyapada*) (6) craving for fine material existence (*ruparāga*) (7) craving for immaterial existence (*aruparāga*) (8) conceit (*māna*) (9) Restlessness (*udacca*) and lastly (10) Ignorance (*avijja*). The first five fetters belong to the lower group as they enable a person to cling to the sensuous (*kama*) world and are called 'orambhagiya sanyojana'. The latter five are called higher division fetters as they enable a person to cling to super sensory worlds and are called 'uddambhagiya sanyojana'. He who gets rid of the first three is called a sotapanna. The next stage is reached when the third and fourth fetters are loosened. Such a being returns only once more to the *kāma* world and for that reason is called a sakadagami. The third stage is reached when the third and fourth fetters are completely broken asunder and for that reason he returns no more to the *kāma* world and is called anagāmi. Such beings are, therefore, born in the Brahma world-Suddavasa—meaning the world of purity where they attain to arahatship. Arahatsip is reached when the five remaining fetters are broken.

Death and birth are sad accompaniments in life. As astronomers say the death of one star is but the birth of another. In this whirligig of time, the life flux hurries on. Our lives are endless unless interrupted by Nibbana. This is a special discovery of the Omniscient Buddha a precious gift to suffering humanity. We who now live in the Dispensation of a Buddha should consider ourselves particularly fortunate. As the river Ganges has its source in the Himalayas so the career of a Maha Arahant or the Chief Disciple begins in earnest only when such a being meets a Buddha and sees the counterpart in the company of the Buddha.

Each Maha Arahant has the lodestar of an ideal which distinguishes the counterpart. He obtains the charter or assurance from a Buddha which in Pali is called Nihatha Vivarana. The aspirant sees a particular Maha Arahant in the company of a Buddha and gives alms usually for seven days in succession and expresses the hope of becoming one day such a Maha Arahant in the company of a future Buddha. The Buddha before such a prophecy is made, likes to make sure not only the fitness of the candidate but also whether a vacancy exists. For a Buddha's word invariably never fails. Buddha Padumuttara the tenth and Buddha Anomadassi who appeared in addition one aeon of kalpas ago the seventh of the line of the Buddha's was the source of a Maha Arahant and Chief Disciple respectively. After the assurance the practice of Paramitas begins in earnest.

These lives are memorable. They portray the epic grandeur of the human mind. They have fought the good fight and they have won. It is the culmination of a career begun under the auspicious assurance of a Samma Sambuddha.

He has travelled long in the Aryan Path. He has at last scaled the heights of Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom. Naught remains for him to do. He has accomplished his task. 'Kathan Karaniyan'. No more for the wayfarer the buffetings of fortune or misfortune that dog the erring mortals. He has arrived in the haven of mental bliss and calm to be understood by the way worn traveller tossed about by repeated painful births in the Samsara.

Ye have scaled the dizzy heights;
 Though we could but gaze and wonder.
 Ye have seen the wondrous sights
 That mortals only could ponder.
 Pilgrims are ye on the road,
 The most ancient yet little known.
 Ye have shed the bitter load,
 That we have so blindly borne.
 Of Buddha the sweetest of flowers,
 Few could see as it is so rare.
 Aryan Sons and Daughters
 We follow in a world of care.

C. de Saram

1. AÑÑA KONDAÑÑA

In seniority none higher

This Bhikkhu was the chief in seniority of the eighty disciples of the Buddha. King Suddhōdana summoned to his palace at Kapilawattu the astrologers as the custom was on the birth of the royal babe Siddhāttha. He was the youngest but not the least of the eight member team that trouped to the palace. In consequence, he came last in order of seniority. The rest of the members partly through ignorance and partly through flattery raised two fingers signifying that the heir of Suddhodana will either be a King of Kings (Cakkavatti Raja) or a Buddha. This gave a gleam of hope to the king who was keen on having an illustrious heir to the royal throne. But when Kondanna's turn came, he raised but one finger emphasizing that the Prince would assuredly become a Buddha.

Naturally knowing not what a Buddha is, the King was rather upset. Kondanna made no mistake. He saw the single white hair *Urnuroma* that has curled up to the right like a box spring on the forehead just between the eyes of the august Babe. In the case of King of Kings the curling is to the left—the curl is the distinctive badge of a King of Kings.

He was the oldest of the five monks that subsequently ministered to Siddhāttha when the latter after the great renunciation, was going through the austerities in quest of truth. This was the time when he and the four monks were of the view that final deliverance lay in extreme asceticism. After experiments the Great Sage gave it up and in consequence the five monks who remained unconvinced, left Him.

Upon enlightenment the Tathagata was looking for a worthy audience to spread the Dhamma. His erstwhile colleagues *Alara Kalama* and *Uddaka Ramaputta* who were fit to receive the Dhamma, were no more. But his five companions, namely, *Bhaddiya*, *Wappa*, *Māha Nāma* and *Assaji* headed by Kondanna remained at the deer Park at *Isipathanā* near Benares. Partly

through gratitude and partly through their fitness to receive the Word, Buddha turned towards them. So the very first sermon was preached by the Buddha to these five monks at Benares. It is the sermon that laid bare the essence of the Doctrine. It is called literally the turning of the Wheel of the Law. *Dhamma Cakkapawattana Sutta* It revealed the Doctrine as the Middle Way *Majjima Patipada* between two extreme schools of thought namely gratification (*Kama Sukkhalikanu*) and mortification *Attakilamathanu* of the senses neither of which leads to Moksha or Deliverance. The existing sermon reveals the beauty of the masterpiece. We are told the Buddha expounded the Doctrine the whole of that fateful night Esala Full Moon. For; what Ananda thera heard from Buddha later recited at the first convocation held at Rajagaha three months after the passing away of the Buddha was only a fragment. But it is fragrant enough.

Kondanna the most senior of the five Bikkhus was a keen listener at the park set apart as a sanctuary for deer at Isipathanā in Benares. Buddha took them over the four Noble Truths the fourth being the Noble Aryān Eight Fold Path which has to be trod to gain Nibbāna. At the closing stages of the great sermon Kondanna understood that if sorrow is caused by desire (*Dukkha Samudaya*) there should also be a sorrowless state (*Dukkha Nirodha*) when desire is eradicated.

While Kondanna was the only human being, eighteen myriads of Brahmas and Devas gained Deliverance on that memorable night.

Verily the sermon shook the world. For never before or since was revealed to man the stupendous Truths that had stood the test of time. Even modern science in a fleeting world has left unscathed these Four Truths. The foundation of the Dhamma was well and truly laid.

He was the first of the Noble Order to enter the Path. He became a sotā panna or a budding saint or Arahant. The Blessed One said truly Kondanna has understood the second and the third Truths. He was known ever afterwards for that reason as Anna Kondanna.

All the five Bikkhus became, in due course, Arahants after daily instructions like fire side chats culminating at the next sermon preached to them called the Anattā Lakkhana Sutta. It is the sermon that debunked the soul theory. They comprise the vanguard of the Noble Order. This was the result of their resolve 100000 kalpas ago.

You have heard the call to arms,
The first of men in this dark world,
When sounded the battle drums,
At the deer park by the Royal Lord.

2. SĀRIPUTTA

Modesty and Simplicity mark the wise

A name that inspires many in the Buddhist World is Sāriputta. Sāriputta was the foremost of the two chief disciples of the Blessed One. If Ananda the constant attendant on the Buddha is called the Treasurer of the Dhamma as he was well known for retentiveness of memory, so Sāriputta is known as the Commander-in-Chief of the Dhamma. In exposition of the Law and for Wisdom he was second only to the Buddha.

Often he was prevailed upon to preach whenever the Blessed One required rest. Once a Brahmin gave him a severe blow to test his capacity for patience. He was unmoved. Then the Brahmin asked for forgiveness which was readily given. Thereafter the Brahmin wished him to partake the midday meal, which offer was also readily accepted. Could such conduct be equalled save by the Blessed One Himself?

Once Sāriputta was in the throes of a stomach-ache. His friend Moggallāna, the chief disciple of the Buddha was present. On inquiry Moggallāna learnt that when Sāriputta was young his mother gave him unadulterated milk rice with honey in a similar affliction. This was overheard by a deva spirit who lost no time in getting a layman's family who lived on the way to prepare such food on pain of dire consequences.

The layman replied that such threats were unnecessary to offer food to Ven. Moggallāna. When Moggallāna got the food on his rounds he gave it to Sāriputta who was suffering from intense pain. It is said that Sāriputta, before he took the food, saw with his divine eye how it was procured and felt that it was not meant for him. Instantly, it is said, the pain disappeared, so great was his Virtue.

His attitude to a seven-year-old Samanera is most touching. It speaks volumes for his modesty. Once he was going about with a corner of his under-garment trailing contrary to Vinaya rules. The Samanera pointed this out to him. He promptly thanked him in salutation and put the matter right.

We all know the hearing of a single stanza uttered by Assaji, one of the first five disciples of the Buddha, set him on the road to Saintship. It is said that he always slept with his head turned towards Assaji wherever he was, out of reverence for his teacher. He had a deep concern for Sanjaya his first teacher. He exhausted all his persuasive powers to have him converted to his views by following Buddha. But Sanjaya would not budge. He had a special regard for Rahula and his mother Rahulamāta. When the latter was suffering from flatulence, he was responsible for getting a particular mango juice to serve as a medicine. When she was suffering from some stomach ailment he obtained from king Pasenadi some rice mixed with ghee and flavoured with red fish to serve as a cure.

When Anathapindika the treasurer lay dying he visited him with Ananda and preached to him the sermon called *Anatha Pindikawade Sutta*.

He was named after his mother Sāri the Brahmin lady. It was written that the two Chief Disciples should predecease the Buddha. Following custom Sāriputta went to his mother's residence at Nalagamaka (Nalanda) after paying obeisance to the Buddha. It was on this occasion he is said to have remarked that his mortal eyes would never behold the august feet of his Master again. Samsaric existence was over. At the sick bed, his brother Cunda Samanuuddesa attended on him.

It was on this last visit that the conversion of his diehard Hindu mother took place when the four guardian deities of the Deva realm, Sakka and Maha Brahma each in turn, flooding the place with increasing brilliance of light, visited him on his sick bed.

Chief art thou mighty in wisdom,
Humble as the Great only are;
Thou wear Dhamma like a diadem,
Thy gratitude nothing could mar.

3. MAHĀ MOGGALLĀNA

To put a girdle round the Universe is easy to him

If Sāriputta could be regarded as the Chief Disciple on the right of Buddha, Moggallāna was the Chief Disciple on His left. They were born on the same day and were associated with each other during many previous lives; so were they during the last life. It was the oldest recorded friendship in the world.

Venerable Moggallāna was foremost in the Noble Order for the performance of psychic feats.

Once a king of Cobras called Nandopananda also noted for psychic feats was threatening all and sundry on the top of Himalayas that should happen to pass that way.

The Buddha was besieged with offers from various members of the Noble Order to subdue the snake king. At last Moggallāna Thera's turn came and the Blessed One readily assented. He knew the Thera was equal to the task. The result was a Himalayan encounter when the Naga King having been worsted in the combat, sued for peace. The Buddha was present throughout and cautioned Moggallāna. This epic feat was succinctly commemorated in the 7th verse of the Jayamangala Gāthā which is recited at almost every Buddhist function.

Whether in shaking the marble palace of Sakka the heavenly ruler by his great toe or visiting hell, he was equally at ease. These visits enabled him to be a sort of an information

bureau. He could graphically narrate to dwellers of this earth the fate of their erstwhile friends or relatives. How by evil Kamma some get an ignominious rebirth in Hell and others by good Kamma an auspicious re-birth in one of the six heavens. These ministrations brought great kudos to the Dispensation much to the chagrin of other sects. His life is an example and a grim warning. Even a Chief Disciple capable of such heroic feats was not immune from the residue of evil Kamma though sown in the very remote past. It was a heinous crime. He was both a matricide and a patricide under most revolting circumstances. Many rebirths in Hell could not adequately erase the evil effects of the dire deed.

Long long ago, to oblige his young wife, whose one obsession was to get rid of her parents-in-law, he took his aged parents to a forest as if going on a journey and waylaid and clubbed them to death, amidst cries of the parents imploring the son to escape from the robbers, who they imagined were clubbing them. In the face of such cruelty, the love of the parents was most touching.

In the last life of Moggallāna, he could not escape the relentless force of Kamma. For with an Arahant's parinirvana, good or bad effects of Kamma come to an end. He was trapped twice by robbers but he made good his escape. But on the third occasion, he saw with his divine eye, the futility of escape. He was mercilessly beaten so much so that his body could be put even in a sack. But death must await his destiny. It is written that a Chief Disciple must not only predecease the Buddha but must also repair to the Buddha before his death (Pari Nibbana) and perform miraculous feats and utter verses in farewell and the Blessed One had to enumerate his virtues in return. He was no exception. The curtain came down closing a celebrated career.

The Noble Order was benefit of the most dynamic figure.

Chief in wonder working powers,
Wrought lustre on the Noble Order.
Humbling great Nagas, he towers,
Telling all across the border.

4. MAHA KASSAPA

His is a rich merit sowing ground

An heir to a vast fortune was married to a virtuous lady called *Bhadda Kapilani* who too, was an heiress. He himself was called *Pippali*. They employed many people in various industrial concerns. Both of them were able by reason of the merit of their former lives to renounce the great wealth and the many comforts that were derived thereby. It was a heroic decision. They have lived many lives as husband and wife. Yet their last marriage was not consummated. Only people of such stature of purpose could rise to dizzy spiritual heights. So they left together the luxury of opulence for the bliss of renunciation. When they were going thus, they were not immune from the remarks of the passers-by. They decided to part company. Instantly the great earth quaked at the snapping of the last link. Even The Buddha at *Jetawanarama* perceived the event and came forward to meet *Kassapa* for such was his name.

For practice of The *Dhutangas* or Austerities (*Dhuta-anga* means shaking off) 13 in number, he was unsurpassed among the 80 *Maha Arahats* of the Buddha. This was the fulfilment of a previous resolve under Buddha *Padumuttara* who prophesied his coming. For self abnegation he was a supreme Master. He came closest to The Buddha in physical appearance. His feet resembled Buddha's most.

He was the only *Arahant* who had the privilege of exchanging robes with the Buddha. It was his fashion to enjoy the bliss of *Nibbāna* off and on. This is called the *Nirodha-Samapatti*. A period of seven days was as a rule its limit. Immediately afterwards, he goes round for alms making it a point to visit the poor and the lowly, for by so doing he confers immense merit to the Giver. The Democracy he upheld. *Sakka* the king of Gods had to resort to the disguise of a poor peasant to partake of the merit even though his action courted a well merited rebuke. The Holy Ones patronised the poor, for the opportunities given to the rich, were denied to them. Thus equality of opportunity was recognised. Once a leper in offering alms accidentally got a

bit of his frail finger to fall into the bowl and the poor man was agitated lest he would miss the merit. But the great Arhant unmoved partook the meal then and there, to the unbounded joy of the giver by putting away the tell tale piece.

Once a woman mistook the Buddha for Māha Kassapa in offering alms. Realising her mistake she quickly took it back to put into the bowl of Māha Kassapa. It is said that she was one of the rare mortals who was not the object of Buddha's generosity during the many aeons of His apprenticeship. Since that incident, the therā forsook the place to live in the Himalayas. He returned only after the passing away of The Buddha. It was on this occasion that owing to the wish of the deities as it was willed by the Buddha, the funeral pyre at Kusi-nāra remained unlit till the arrival of Māha Kassapa. It was left to Maha Anuruddha to interpret the omen.

Māha Kassapa was on the way, a late entrant to the Noble Order, Subhadda by name, made a startling observation, that now the restraining hand of the Blessed One was no more, they should rejoice; they were like school children, once the master turns his back.

This set Māha Kassapa thinking what, if this monk were to have followers was to be the fate of the Dispensation of the Buddha. To meet the challenge after the third month of the passing away of the Buddha the first convocation or Dhamma Sangayana took place by the participation of 500 Arahants presided over by Māha Kassapa under the patronage of Ajatasattu, the king of Magadha. It was in the cave called Saptaparni at Rajagaha in Magadha that the conference was held. So skillfully did he preside that there was no hitch. The Buddha had on one occasion exchanged robes with him. So he could be regarded as a successor to Buddha not only in the exchange of robes but also in putting the Dhamma on a sound footing even as it exists today.

Dhuta anga is the name for certain ascetical vows or practices intended to strengthen frugality, renunciation energy etc. Of the vows either one or several may be taken for a longer or shorter period of time.

Path to Deliverance Nayanatiloka Maha therā.

The sanctity depends upon the privacy of its practice - Author.

Heir left of the Sovereign Lord
The poor had no greater friend,
He took Dhamma as his ward,
To put the Law on happy trend.

For austerities pre eminent
For friendship with the poor Great;
Heir of the Lord born not made;
Foundation of the Law was laid.

5. ANURUDDHA

To him nothing is hidden

On a memorable day, six kinsmen of the Buddha accompanied by their barber Upali sought ordination. In that company the most notable was Anuruddha. His friend King of the Sakyans Bhaddiya (none higher than he by birth) was also there. So, too, Devadatta who demonstrated that by ambition even angels fell. The other three were Ananda who distinguished himself in many ways, Bagu and Kimbala. He was the first cousin of Buddha. He was the son of Amitodana a brother of King Suddodana.

By the Maha Arahata Anuruddha's life, we gain a glimpse of the arduous and exacting life of a cultivator specially of paddy in those far off days. First of all the ground has to be prepared, the bunds have to be made ready to get the water confined. Sowing should be in due season. Weeds have to be uprooted from time to time harvesting threshing and winnowing follow rapidly after each other, to be repeated year after year unceasingly. Prince or peasant must labour for the common good.

To Anuruddha following the Buddha was relatively a pleasant task.

The story goes on that six Sakyans gave all their princely apparel and ornaments in a bundle to Upali the barber who followed them and requested him to go back and relate the story of their going forth. But Upali soon afterwards rejoined them, by

hanging the bundle to a branch on a wayside tree with a request to a passer-by, for its return. The Sakyans were pleased with his conduct specially when he mentioned that he might have been suspected of murder and even put to death for Sakyans are said to be cruel, had he hazarded to do their bidding.

It was unanimously decided by them to ask the Buddha to ordain Upali the barber first so that according to precedence each had to pay due respect to Upali. Buddha concurred. As a rule, they were a proud and overbearing race. So, in the Dispensation of the Buddha there is no room for pride (*māna*) It is the main stumbling block to sainthood. It was the sanyojana or chain that binds one to "Samsara" which means the prolonged existence for many lives till Nibbana is realised. Only by attaining Arahatsip can one annihilate pride.

The ordination of Anuruddha was a marked success, for in the very first year, he became an Arahant and was given a title by Buddha, that he was pre-eminent for supernatural vision.

It was he who advised Ananda the constant attendant of the Buddha that Buddha who was passing through all the preparatory stages of four Jhanas of trances should not be mistaken as having obtained final release Nibbana at the end of each stage.

It was he who advised the King of Mallas at Kusinara when feverish attempts were made by men to light the funeral pyre of the Buddha to desist, until the arrival of the Maha Kassapa as that was the wish of the deities present giving vent to the Will of the Buddha.

It was this Arahant who had such a holy horror of poverty that he wished long, long ago that whatever station of life he was born into, that he would be spared the anguish of hearing "No". The story goes that even in the last life, when he was playing with companions, he sent word to his mother, to send him some rice cakes; probably he played for stakes and lost.

Again and again he sent for ricecakes. But time came when the stock of rice cakes ran out. He was so imformed. He sent the attendant back to send the "No" rice cakes. His

mother sent an empty box in response to such a strange request. So great was the meritorious past of the Prince, that a dewa who overheard what has transpired instantly filled the box with ambrosial rice cakes. The attendant was amazed to see rice cakes on opening the box in the presence of the prince and companions.

He lived long after the passing away of the Buddha for his life span was 150 years. He was the fifth Maha Arahant.

The first Sakyan to answer the call,
To be with the Chief of men
The secrets his vision could recall,
No matter where and when.

6. BHADDIYA SON OF KALIGODA

The holy life claimed the acme of highest birth

Among the Maha Arhants Bhaddiya son of Sakyan King of Kaligoda ranks highest for birth. Hence he was called Kaligoda putta. Suddhodana father of Prince Siddhartha took it on himself to impress the Sakyans to join the Noble Order. As a result of his exertions a great event took place. Bhaddiya was a member of the team of six Sakyans accompanied by Upali the barber to meet the Buddha.

In that company was Devadatta who unfortunately fell from grace. At all times, it would be exceedingly difficult for a King to renounce the World and join the Noble Order. Even at that remote time, Kingship was no less onerous. So reasoned the mother of Anuruddha, when the latter sought permission to join the Noble Order; the old lady felt that it would be impolite to give a direct refusal. So she gave her consent on condition his friend Bhaddiya the king joining him. She thought Anuruddha would fail to secure his assent. Anuruddha, however, importuned the King to join him. But time passed. Still the King put Anuruddha off by pleading for 7 years. In those days Truth was enthroned in society. And a king's word was synonymous with truth. It was the prerogative of royalty.

Anuruddha pleaded for a shorter term. The period was gradually reduced to seven days. The six Sakyans met the Blessed One at the Mango grove called Anupiya. Buddha's concern for His relatives is well known. It was the characteristic trait of the Bosat. To Bhaddhiya it was the fulfilment of a wish and a resolve that saw its germ when Padumuttara was Buddha many millions of years ago. The Noble Order has been compared to a great ocean in which the waters of many rivers great or small merge. Men of diverse families high or low of various races and walks of life join the Noble Order and like the water of the great ocean it was not possible to say that here is the water of Ganges river or there is the water of rivers Aciravati Yamuna, Sarabhu or Mahi. The waters have lost their identity. The Noble Order like the great Ocean levels all differences that lie between king and beggar between a noble and an outcaste. The differences ceased to exist. It was a bond of fellowship governed by the rules of Vinaya that has been a model and a pattern of conduct. In doing so Buddha foresaw the ways of Parliament. The nobility was merged in the Noble Order and thus lost its identity. The holy life claimed the acme of highest birth. So the Buddha addressing the Monks proclaimed that among his Maha Arahants none could have a greater claim to high birth than Bhaddiya the King of Sakyans.

To the ocean all rivers flow,
 In the Order the birth is lost;
 To kinsmen he showed the Law;
 The royalty has gained most.

7. LAKUNTAKA BHADDIYA

No gift could excel that of speech

Though diminutive in stature he had a melodious voice. Among the 80 Maha Arahants his voice was pre-eminent. Of all gifts, gift of speech is the most precious. His superb voice came next to Buddha's which resembles most the singing of the bird called Karavitta of the Himalayas the King of the winged tribe for Sweetness. To the nightingale its counterpart the poet

Shelley was rapturous in his Ode. Millions of years ago he met the counterpart when Padumuttara was Buddha. He had a yearning to be a Maha Arahant in a future dispensation of a Buddha gifted with the most exalted voice. Buddha Padumuttara prophesied that he was destined to play his part in the present Dispensation of Gautama Buddha.

This aspiration ran in life after life. In due course, the merit ripened. In one life, there was a lapse on his part. The result was his short stature for which the word Lakuntaka stands. It appeared he was a Chief Carpenter or (in modern parlance,) an engineer during the time of Buddha Kassapa. After parinirvana (the passing away) of the Buddha preparations were afoot to erect a worthy Dagoba to enshrine the relics. A peerless Buddha required a Taj Mahal. The fateful decision rested with Bhaddiya.

Unfortunately, he limited the height for no apparent reason. For this offence he was born ever afterwards of diminutive stature. The appearance of a Buddha was a very rare event in the World. Buddha was a very rare flower of humanity. One runs grave risks to limit the scope of a memorial for a Buddha. But the stature of a Maha Arahant hardly counts because of his immense virtue.

It is said that the voice betrays the man. The well-known story of Kumbhaghosaka illustrates the point. His parents were immensely wealthy and they died of a plague. He was the only son and the story goes that he could claim immunity only if he escaped by boring a hole through the wall of the house. Thinking on returning, that the sudden advent of wealth would betray him, he decided to lie low. He secured employment. His job was to rouse the jobless who lived on a particular road, every morning. For the early bird they say catches the first worm. So early morning Kumbhaghosaka awakens them by cries. The King, one day, heard his voice while he was so engaged. The science pertaining to the human voice now lost, the king knew. He felt the owner of the voice was wealthy. Subsequent interesting revelations confirmed the king's surmise. The king gave his own daughter in marriage to the young man. So the human voice plays a decisive role in life's affairs. The voice is the key to

character. Bhaddiya's voice was deeply prized in a maha Arahant. Buddha preached Bhaddiya Sutta wherein he extolled that he though hump-backed and unsightly, was highly gifted and his character was most lofty.

The gift of Dhamma says Buddha excels all the other gifts. Hence, Bhaddiya was doubly fortunate as he never failed to attract an audience.

It is well known in the Buddhist world that a frog who was fascinated by the voice of the Buddha, dying under a stick of a shepherd who leaned heavily on it, whilst also listening to Buddha, was reborn in the Tusita heaven as Manduka dewa. Buddha declared that Lakuntaka Bhaddiya was pre-eminent in the Noble Order for his voice.

His voice vibrating with music,
Bringing men to Dhamma's fold,
Curing minds by the physic,
Though he was puny to behold.

8 PINDOLA BHĀRADVĀJA

Like unto a lion among men

The Lion is the "King of Animals." For ferocity and strength there is none in the animal kingdom to match him. When he gets up on a mountain crag and roars the animals tremble in fear as the sound reverberates in the upland slopes. It is the triumphant roar of mastery.

This Arahant was once born as a lion many years ago, when Padumuttara was Buddha. Though a lion he has had a meritorious past. The Buddha saw with his divine eye about his auspicious future. One day, the Buddha bearded the lion in his own den. The Lion was out and Buddha sat in the air overlooking the cave. On his return, the lion who knows no fear was amazed to see a visitor equally brave. The lion's guess was correct. Undoubtedly the visitor was an exalted being and

urged by inner promptings due to his past good kamma, he set about cutting the choicest flowers and heaped them up before the Lord as an offering.

For seven days the lion thus honoured the Buddha every day by fresh flowers. When the Buddha left him, the lion was inconsolable and he died of a broken heart. He was born as a son to a wealthy family in the city of Hansavati. In due course, he met his counterpart and forthwith resolved one day to be a maha Arahant pre-eminent for possession of a lion like voice. In due course he received the assurance.

Long afterwards he was born as the Chief of Brahmins of 500 followers by the name Bhāradvāja. As he was solicitous about the requirements of his followers and as he set about it in a loud manner, he was nicknamed Pindola. He sought ordination from Lord Buddha, dissatisfied with Brahminic lore. In no little time he became an Arahant. Wherever he went, he was armed with a key – a master key to open any lock. Pindola's Key was merely a symbol to all and sundry that he was prepared to solve any problem about spiritual welfare.

His presence was reassuring. He instilled confidence to many. In this wise he became a remarkable and popular figure in the Noble Order. But his forwardness has its price. It so happened that the treasurer at Benares got a particular net up the river in order to provide security and safety to the river bathers. One day a log of sandalwood got wedged in the net. So he got hold of the log and like all rich and careful men found out a use for the same. He got a bowl made of it and planted it about 60 cubits high with the help of several bamboos tied together. He challenged any one to take this bowl away through the air. This was a time when there were various sects contending for pre-eminence.

It is so even now. Arahantship was the prerogative of each sect. So one day Nigantha Natha Putta came with his followers to take the bowl away. But as per-arranged, his followers would have none of it. So the Chief raised his arm or his leg as if to rise in the air. The followers prevented him imploring him not to make a public scene.

In this way, various leaders managed to stave off defeat. But the challenging bowl was there. One day, Pindola and Maha Moggallana taking with them a large piece of rock hovered over the city and the people were afraid lest the stone would be allowed to fall over their heads. When the treasurer saw this, he implored them to desist. He offered the bowl to Pindola filled with sweet food fit to be taken after noon. This incident reached the ears of many. It whipped up public enthusiasm as it did never before. One day, the peoples's applause reached even Jetavanarama.

Buddha got the offending bowl brought before Him and had it crushed. It was not meet for a Member of the Noble Order let alone a Maha Arahant to display psychic power for gain. Ostentation has no place nor exhibition in Buddha's Dispensation. He was unusually fond of food. But he gradually mastered this failing.

It was in the nature of Tathagata to admonish as well as to praise whenever occasion arose. Pindola's popularity grew. One day the Buddha addressing the Monks extolled the virtues of Pindola and said that among his Maha Arahants Pindola alone possessed the Lion-like voice.

He had a lion's roar,
Lion was he in every way,
He was never in the rear,
Losing the self he won the way.

9. PUNNA - SON OF MANTANI

Glory of Speech is precous

He was a leader Gotama by name, of 500 followers. Himself a Brahmin he was well versed in Vedic lore. Just as a plantain tree has no hard core, or as trying to obtain oil from sand, or rice from husk, he realised the futility of such knowledge. He betook himself to the Himalayas and perfected himself in five-fold knowledge and eight - fold practices which confer on the candidate psychic power-vide the life of Udaya 64. In due course, his following swelled to 18000. He was growing old. It was at this juncture when

his followers has left him in search of food such as fruits herbs and roots that Padumttara the Buddha visited him. He recognised the Buddha even from afar. Forthwith, he prepared a seat for the Buddha who addressed him on the subtle shades of the Dhamma (Law). His followers were amazed to see their erstwhile Lord having one above him. Punna feared that they would pay obeisance and offer the choicest food to him in the presence of the Buddha. So he forestalled them by advancing towards them and advised them to recognise the Buddha as their Master. The Buddha willed that the followers of the Noble Order including His 2 Chief Disciples should meet him there. In no long time Buddha's followers flocked to the spot. Punna then ordered his men to honour the Lord's followers with the choicest flowers from far and near from hill and dale.

As they had as much psychic power as their leader this was relatively easy. For seven days the Buddha and His followers were thus honoured. On the seventh day the Buddha addressing a particular monk requested him to give thanks (*Punnanumodana*) The result was an admirable speech based on the Dhamma. Punna thereupon aspired to be one day an Arahant such as he in the Dispensation of a future Buddha. Buddha prophesied that it would be his lot under Gautama Buddha. As Sāriputta and Moggallana the two chief disciples before him, all his followers became Arahants while the Leader yearned for the greater glory of a Maha Arahant. Since then towards his last life, he perfected his power of speech so much so that under Gautama Buddha, he excelled all the other Maha Arahants. He always had a large following. So in the last life he had 500 followers and he was known as Punna son of Mantāni. He fully trained them both by precept and example. One day they felt that they must repair to the Lord and Master, the Buddha. Punna felt that it was not meet that such a trained band should go with him. So he directed them towards the Buddha who was at Veluwanarama, in Rajagaha to act as forerunners of his own visit. As the moon reflected the glory of the sun, so the followers did that of the Punna. Sāriputta longed to meet Punna. And meet they did in a forest called Andhavana which is so called because 500 robbers went blind for the heinous

act they committed of killing long ago a saintly man. Their intention was to rob. For they heard he was collecting subscriptions for the building of a dagoba to enshrine the relics of Buddha Kasyapa. It was an intellectual treat to listen to their conversation. Learning and Piety met their match. To each of Venerable Sariputta's questions whether Sila (virtue) Visuddhi, or Citthi (mind) Visudhi or Ditthi (view) Visudhi or Kankhavitaraṇa (conquest of doubts) Visuddhi, or Maggamaṅgala Nanadassana (knowledge and insight into the right and wrong paths) Visuddhi or Patipada Nanadassana (knowledge and insight into path progress) Visuddhi or Nanadassana (knowledge and insight into the four supermundane states) Visuddhi would lead a bhikkhu to the realisation of Nibbana he said "No" Visuddhi here means purifying side Vissudhi Magga path of purity. When asked to explain he gave an apt illustration; just as when a King say of Kosala having a long journey to make, say from Savatti to Saketa would have seven pairs of horses harnessed to the chariot by relays at each stage of the 7 stages which he would fix beforehand of the long journey. Neither one relay nor some but all the relays combined would help him to complete the journey. So the 7 Visuddhi are compared to the 7 relays of the journey. If the king of Kosala on arriving at Saketa were to be asked whether he made the journey by the last pair or any other or the first second third or fourth or fifth or sixth pair of horses his reply would be "No". When asked to explain he would say that he was enabled to make the journey by all the 7 pairs of horses taking part by 7 relays Even so the Elder Punna said that the practice of the seven Visuddhi all combined would enable the aspiring bhikkhu to realise Nibbana. At the end of the talk known as Rathavinitcha Sutta they freely exchanged greetings and compliments. When Punna heard that the questioner was none other than venerable Sāriputta he was exceedingly pleased. Not long afterwards the Buddha addressing the monks extolled Punna and said that among his Maha Arahants, Punna excelled as an expounder of Dhamma.

A marvellous speaker was he,
 A born leader and teacher,
 Holding the Law with sure key,
 He could every storm-weather.

10. MAHĀ KACCANĀ.

"Multum in Parvo"

He has an innate love for analysis and exposition. Few could build an edifice with fewer materials. Into one word he could impart a wealth of meaning by exposition.

Buddha Padumuttara gave the assurance that his wish would be fulfilled during the Dispensation of Gautama Buddha. He offered a gold brick to the dagoba enshrining the relics of the Buddha Kassapa with the wish that wherever and whenever he was born he could be one with the colour of gold.

Thereafter he was born as the adviser to King Chandraprajota. The king was anxious to invite Gautama Buddha to his city. It was the unanimous wish that Kaccāna be chosen. Kaccāna replied that he would do so if permission was given to him to enter the Noble Order. The King replied that he may. He visited the Buddha accompanied by seven persons.

In no long time they all became Arahants. Kaccāna mentioned to the Buddha the need to visit Udēni City. The Buddha enjoined Kaccāna to go instead. On his way a remarkable incident took place. There were two maids, one blessed with long and lustrous tresses but poor and the other deficient in the same but rich. The rich maid made several bids gradually increasing to 100 gold coins but in vain to secure the other's tresses. When the Venerable Kaccāna arrived with his 7 followers the poor maid resolved to give alms depending upon her hair which she promptly cut and offered to the rich maid through her foster mother. But like everything else any article became contemptuous and cheap when seller was anxious to sell. So she was offered only 8 gold kahapanas. But her faith was so great she was not dismayed. She spent the proceeds to render alms to the 8 Arahants. After the alms giving the Venerable Kaccāna desired to meet the donor who was reluctant to come forward lest her discomfiture would be seen.

Here Kamma operated giving instant results. The moment she came and prostrated at the feet of the Maha Arahant the hair grew mysteriously and she was none the worse for parting

due to her immense Faith or Saddha. So at last when the king heard this from Venerable Kaccāna he made her the Queen. Thus she got the better of the rich maid who never practised giving.

Hence the Buddha had declared that the Noble Order could be likened unto a very fertile field where the harvest was even more than hundred fold Anuttaram Punnakkeṭṭam field of uncomparable meriit. The Buddha addressing the Monks some time afterwards said that among his Maha Arahants Maha Kaccāna excelled in the masterly exposition of Dhamma by expanding Dhamma's brief text.

His was a merit sowing ground,
The girl got back her tresses,
Which to offer alms she parted.
A line he expands and stresses.

11. CULLA PANTHAKA AND

12. MĀHA PANTHAKA

- i. *The Mind can work Miracles.*
- ii. *The Formless Plane was his beat.*

Culla Panthaka was associated with his elder brother who is called Māha Panthaka. As both were born on the road they were called Panthaka. Culla Panthaka was distinguished from all the Māha Arahants by the power to form any number of corporeal figures by the psychic power and also by his ability to practise mystic meditation in the world of form. He, too, has got the assurance in the dim past from Padumuttara the Buddha when he met his counterpart. His elder brother's aspiration was to be foremost in Jhāna power in the formless world. The same Buddha prophesied that both would have their aspirations fulfilled in the Dispensation of Gautama Buddha. On each occasion an almsgiving for seven days to Buddha and his followers preceded the prophecy. There was no outstanding event in the life of the two brothers except in the case of the

younger brother Culla Panthaka. In the time of Kassapa the Buddha, he practised meditation entering the Noble Order for 20,000 years (for that was the life span at the time) on "Odata Kasina", or the Kasina based on colour white.

They were the offspring of a daughter of a treasurer entering into a clandestine marriage with a servant of her father's household. This explains the birth of the first child while the expectant mother was on the way to meet her parents with her paramour. They both returned home as the child was born on the road. This was repeated in the case of the second child too. On the birth of the latter they decided finally to meet the parents. But the parents were willing to adopt their 2 grandsons only. Thus they were sent away with whatever dowry the parents wished to give them. The elder child desired to enter the Noble Order. He got the younger brother to follow him. But the younger brother paid no heed to reciting. In-calculable harm is done to a pupil by a wrong teacher. Each pupil has his own path to tread (Kammattāna). It is for the right teacher to point it out. Elder brother though a Maha Arahant to play the teacher to his younger brother nearly ended badly. Culla Panthaka was asked to memorise a verse of 4 lines but he was unable to do so for 4 months with the result the elder brother felt that he was of no use to the Dispensation. Culla Panthaka was asked to quit.

So crestfallen Culla Panthaka was sobbing in a corner of the temple. His grief was all the more when his elder brother made preparations to attend an almsgiving of Jivaka the Physician to 500 Bhikkus, with Buddha at the head, less one meaning himself, on the following day.

The Buddha came to his rescue. He gave him a piece of linen of spotless white and asked him to stroke it facing the sun saying that nothing is so clean that does not turn impure. The words were "Rajōharanam".

In due course, perspiration from the palm of his hand made the cloth exceedingly dirty. The universality of change (anicca) which is the key note of the doctrine of Buddhism was grasped. This lesson he had learnt in a previous life when as a

king he observed that his headgear had been soiled by the perspiration from his forehead. It was a necessary prelude to sorrow. None can gain Arahatsip without this insight. The long preparation he had made in previous lives bore fruit.

So Culla Panthaka became an Arahant.

At the same time, the latent power was manifested. He got the psychic power to create any number of corporeal figures which was soon put to a practical test. The almsgiving; came to pass. Buddha promptly put His hand over the bowl when food was offered. The reason was Culla Panthaka, who was left out, must participate. So an attendant was sent to the temple, that was close by, to fetch him. He was amazed to see in the temple over a thousand Bhikkhus all looking alike. So it was duly reported to the Jivaka who redirected him to say that Culla Panthaka was expected. On the second visit the wonder grew. For as soon as the name of Culla Panthaka was mentioned all the monks began saying "I am Culla Panthaka". In the meanwhile the almsgiving was held up by the rapidly developing drama. So the attendant was asked by the Jivaka as directed by the Buddha to go again and this time to catch hold of the robe of the first monk nearest to him saying that the Buddha wants Culla Panthaka. When this was done, the temple appeared deserted except for the bhikkhu whose robe he was holding. So the younger brother took his due place in the almsgiving. It is to him that the Blessed One turned to render merit by a short sermon called *Pun anumodana* in Pali. Afterwards a discussion ensued among the monks about the feat of the Buddha. His past was unfolded by the Blessed One. Long ago at the university Panthaka though loyal and obedient, was backward in his studies. When the time came for his departure, his teacher felt sad about his plight. He gave a simple formula which he should memorise and constantly repeat lest he would forget. In Pali it is *Gattasi Gattasi Kin Karanan Gattasi Ahampi Tan Janami Janami*. It means "why are you doing wrong, I know you I know you". In due course he was welcomed home by his brother at Benares. At this juncture the king of Benares wished to obtain a pulse of the affairs of his kingdom while going about incognito in the night. This

expedient was resorted to by the kings of old to remedy the evils of public life. On a later day, king Alfred of England did the same. Although he was seeking to regain his throne.

One night the king observed some burglars breaking the wall and entering the house where the newly returned student was residing. He was awakened and went on repeating by force of habit loudly the line as directed by his teacher. The burglars got alarmed and fearing they are recognised, fled from the scene. Early morning the king sent for him. The king learnt the magical formula. His tutor was rewarded. One day the royal barber who was hired by the army commander to kill the king for a large reward, was about to carry out the plot when he was suddenly upset by the king himself repeating the mantram. He fell prostrate at the king's feet and begged for pardon confessing what has transpired. The Army Commander was summarily dismissed and sent into exile. And instead the King sent for his teacher the erstwhile pupil and appointed him.

Again The Buddha narrated another story of the past.

We go back to Benares when Brahmadutta was ruling. Again and again in Jataka stories we hear this refrain. Naturally it is so, for Brahmadutta probably means a title just as much as Caesar. Kaiser or Mikado means to us in the present day; such names perpetuate kingship. There was the king's pandit astrologer. He was on his way to the palace when he observed a dead rat. He prophesied an auspicious start to anyone disposing of the dead rat judging from the peculiar conjunction of stars. A poor man heard about what was foretold. He took the dead rat and met an owner of a cat who was on the look out for food. A bargain was quickly struck and with the proceeds he bought some sugar candy and taking with him a pot of water he repaired to the botanical gardens to supply the men who were working there and who welcomed him. Again and again he went there and earned ultimately about 8 gold coins. One day a storm broke out. As usual when he went to the gardens he was offered the debris free. He sold the same to the keeper of the king's kiln. From him he got 16

gold coins. Thus he earned 24 gold coins. Then he proceeded to the city gates and gradually became friends with all those who ply for living both on land and water.

One day he heard that merchants with 500 horses would land. Then he cornered the grass market. He bought all available grass everywhere and the merchants were perforced to part with 1000 pieces of gold to obtain this grass supply. He became very clever in rigging the market. Ultimately he became a merchant prince. He was the forerunner of the modern millionaire. He did not forget, unlike others, the person who showed the road to success. He had the noble and rare quality of gratitude. He offered his benefactor half his wealth. On hearing what has transpired he was exceedingly pleased. He was loath to let him go. He offered him his own daughter in marriage with a suitable dowry. On the death of his father-in-law he stepped into his shoes. It was Bosat in both stories who was his teacher. In this last birth, too, the Buddha showed the way—The Appian road to Nibbana. And the Buddha addressing Monks extolled Culla Panthaka and Mahā Panthaka that among his Maha Arahants Culla Panthaka was foremost in the ability to form any number of corporeal figures by the psychic power *manomaya iddhi* and also to practise mystic meditation in the world of Form likewise his elder brother Mahā Panthaka was that in the jhana power in the Formless worlds. (Arupa Loka) There was a discussion among the monks whether Māha Panthaka was angry when he requested the younger brother to get out. Buddha said an Arahant least of all a Maha Arahant was incapable of getting angry. His request became the means of the younger brother's deliverance.

A vast mine of latent talent,
Buddha explored with telling effect
A backward pupil found dormant,
By elder brother the Lord's elect.

Born on the way, he found the way,
By trance he entered the Arupa way,
By sheer effort he made night the day
Ignorance and greed drew away.

13. SUBHUTI

"He was supremely free from moral depravity"

As the name implies the body of this Maha Arahant had a shining appearance. He was faultless. He did nothing low or mean. Not that other Maha Arahants were guilty of such a lapse. But Venerable Subhuti was singularly free from blemish.

When he was preaching he did not beat about the bush. So great was his preaching that he was Buddha-like. He was noted for freedom from moral depravity. When he was going round for alms from house to house, his mind was immersed in loving kindness for all beings. So that alms given to him conferred merit on the giver a hundred fold. The virtues of a Maha Arahant were many. But Venerable Subhuti was outstanding as worthy of receiving alms.

In this Dispensation of Gautama Buddha he had much to do with the Chief Lay-Disciple of Buddha, Anāthapindika in short Anēpidu. He was a merchant prince. He was so called because he was a tower of strength to the poor. How he met Buddha and how Buddha addressed him as Sudatta which only the parents knew and how his enthusiasm was kindled to his building a magnificent residence for Buddha on a land purchased from Prince Jeta for a colossal sum, fills a glorious page in the annals of Buddhism. He was regarded as the Chief Lay Disciple while Visakha as the Chief Lay female Disciple. On the day of dedication of Jetavanarama by Anēpidu Venerable Subuti met Buddha at the same spot and sought ordination. Taking a suitable text for his meditation Kammatahana from the Incomparable Teacher the Buddha, he repaired to the forest.

In no long time afterwards Buddha addressing the monks said Subhuti of all his Maha Arahants was pre-eminent for his complete freedom from moral depravity and also of his being worthy to receive alms.

Free from blemish; a steady speaker,
He walked the earth with loving trend.
To the giver always a tenfold to usher.
The Setthi had no greater friend.

14. KHADIRAVANIYA REWATA

Solitude and saintliness go together.

As his name implied, he was Revata dweller of Khadiravaniya forest. He was the youngest brother of Venerable Sariputta the Chief Disciple of Buddha. He had a yearning for solitude. He loved to dwell in forbidding forests.

He had the privilege of being born in the illustrious family which gave the world the Commander of the Dhammasariputta. The family owned an immense fortune as all his brothers joined the order. A marriage was struck. At the wedding ceremony of Revata who was only 7 years old and his bride equally young, a golden pot of water was placed before them which they touched in token of symbolic union as water in the pot when wishing the bride many years of happiness and prosperity just as the grandmother did before her. Rewata looked at the young bride and then at the grandmother who was 120 years old. The contrast of youth and old age was telling. Revata was told that if death did not intervene, his young wife would share the same fate.

Graphic was the picture of old age. Bereft of teeth and hair turned grey, emaciated body, weak faculties, wrinkled skin, and the feeble body being supported by a prop. and gobbling over words in a word sans teeth sans eyes and sans everything. To Revata it was the end of marriage. His youthful wife to share the same fate was too much for him.

During the journey home, Revata pretended to be ill and after feigning twice, finally disappeared to the forest. He eluded pursuit by taking a short cut to the temple and sought ordination from the resident monks. Strange words coming from a youthful prince clad in festive garb. Naturally they refused the request. The horror stricken prince exclaimed "do not destroy me" On being further questioned for making such a statement the prince replied that he was referring to the triple happiness of a monk, alluding to happy rebirth human or divine and realisation of Nibbana. Finally he said that he was the youngest brother of Upatissa now known as Sāriputta.

This worked. The name of Sāriputta was all too familiar in the Noble Order. Sāriputta has made it known that if Revata is to seek ordination none should refuse him. He stood as guarantor. He was duly ordained and obtained the formula of meditation. From there he was going to meet the Buddha when he came to a forbidding forest still haunted by the fear of pursuit. He sojourned there. The forest is called Khadirawaniya meaning acacia forest. The formula of meditation or Kammattana was helpful and he became an arahant.

The time came for Buddha to visit him. There were two routes open to Buddha and 500 monks among whom were Sāriputta and Ananda. One was an easy route though long and the other was a tedious one though short. The Buddha preferred the latter banking upon the presence of Sivali the Maha Arahant. For Sivali connotes plenty.

There was no privation. Both deities and demons worked strenuously to make smooth the journey. Nothing ran short. The psychic power of Revata was manifested in making the place to look normal. The question was raised by some monks that after all, Buddha went out of His way to make the journey. These monks were worldlings. When the Buddha asked Revata as to his reaction on hearing the fierce cries of the wild animals, he promptly replied it was joy. Buddha extolled the virtues of Venerable Revata in 500 verses and left the place wishing that those who questioned the propriety of His visit would forget to take with them these four requisites of a monk. This took place accordingly. They rescued their belongings, with much difficulty. The glamour that Revata created had disappeared. They found the place forbidding. They realised then that the place was transformed purely by Iddhi power of Venerable Revata for the occasion.

Not long afterwards Buddha addressing the monks, declared that among forest dwellers Khadirawaniya Revata was foremost among His Maha Arahants.

A young lover fled from his wife,
When faced with the truth of old age,
In the forest he lived his life,
He was visited by the Sage.

15. KANKHA REVATA

A question mark hangs upon everything.

He was so called because he took nothing for granted. He saw everything under a question mark. It is said that Bernard Shaw the celebrated Irish dramatist once remarked that to everything hangs a question mark.

Once he saw 'mun' seed or green gram sprouting in a heap of excreta and thereupon he doubted whether the partaking of green gram as food by the Bhikkus is proper. He was also fond of going into trance (Jhana) and enjoy the bliss of emancipation (Nirodhasamapatti) again and again. This was a gift of transcending the mundane world for 7 days at a stretch possessed by certain arahants. He had a yearning for this special privilege. He became an adept.

Before he became an arahant, his mind was greatly perturbed as to what was permissible to use or not to use. He was ranked among the most eminent disciples. In a discussion with some of them, he has extolled habitation in the abodes of solitude and the delights of meditation.

He was born to a wealthy family in this Dispensation at Sravasti.

Not long afterwards the Buddha addressing the Bhikkhus and the laity declared that Kankha Revata was the foremost for his quick transition to trance (jhana) in the Noble Order.

To him are the Why and Wherefore,
His food. Subjects all to question.
He seeks solitude before
Seeking the bliss by meditation.

16. KOLIVISA SONA

"Labor Omnia Vincit."

This Maha Arahant was a bundle of energy. There was no task that he undertook which he failed to accomplish without utmost energy. Not that the other Maha Arahants were lacking in energy but this Arahant was supreme.

He hailed from the Kolivisa family. Kolivisa was another name for a millionaire.

Soon after the Parinibbana of Kasyapa Buddha he was born in the city of Benares. He had the great good fortune of meeting a Pacceka Buddha. He was one of those Buddhas who usually have their haunt at the rock called Gandamana in the Himalayas. They are distinguished from Samma Sambuddhas as they haven't the ability to make men realise the Truth. They are sometimes called for this reason alone, "silent Buddhas". Just as there are no two suns at the same time, so Pachcheka Buddha does not appear in the world when there was a Samma Sambuddha. He had a residence built for the Pacceka Buddha and gave alms for three months. Finally, he offered a priceless shawl to be used as a carpet. He resolved that he, too, would be born with a handsome appearance and his feet would be extraordinarily soft. Thereafter, he was born in this Dispensation of Gautama Buddha in the City of Calachampa to a very wealthy family. His birth brought added wealth. His appearance was so pleasing that he was called Sona. By reason of meritorious past coupled with aspiration, his diet consisted of a special rice in the preparation of which perfume plays no small a part.

Even the husks of this paddy was in great demand. And it was this rice that enabled him to seek the blessing of the Buddha. One day Elder Moggallana was anxious to procure a special diet for the Buddha who was convalescing after an illness. He saw with his divine eye Sona, enjoying perfumed rice in the far off city of Kalacampa. Forthwith he was there with the begging bowl. Sona was delighted to see the Maha Thera, and offered him this particular brand of cooked rice. When this was done the Thera explained the purport of the mission. Sona's

joy knew no bounds. He requested the Thera to partake the food saying that he would give the Buddha the food that he sought.

So after the meal the bowl was duly washed and filled with the rice. Before the flexed arm could be outstretched the Great Thera was able by his wonderful psychic power, to place the bowl at the feet of the Master at Veluwana the Vihare donated by King Bimbisara at Rajagaha. At the same moment King Bimbisara arrived with a special diet for the Buddha. As soon as the bowl was laid bare the spreading fragrance of the rice took the King by surprise. The king thought that this food was of Sakka the King of the Gods or from the country of Kurus. The Kurus were people chosen by Buddha as fit to receive a learned discourse on Dhamma known as Satipatthana Sutta or the sermon on mindfulness. The text provides a course of meditation that is unique. In the words of the Blessed one it is the one and only way to Deliverance. By the way, mindfulness is the seventh link of the Noble Eight fold Path. The Buddha sensing the feelings of the King said that the food was from no other than from his own vassal at Kala Campa. The Buddha diplomatically offered a portion of the food to the king. This made the King to send for Sona and requested him to meet Buddha. Sona was glad for the opportunity. He accordingly met The Buddha and sought ordination. He was given a suitable text for meditation. (Kammattana). The vigour with which he plied to be an Arahant made his soft feet on the soles of which even ornamental curls of hair grew and which he seldom placed on the ground, split while walking in meditation. The blood was oozing from his feet and the place looked a shambles. He was so much dissatisfied with the tardy progress, that he even thought of resuming the layman's life.

The all compassionate Buddha saw what was happening. Buddha knew that Sona had the capacity to become a Maha Arahant. Sona was a great violinist or one who was proficient in the playing of the lute. The Buddha reminded him that music cannot be produced either by tightening the strings too much or keeping the strings too loose, neither too flat nor too taut.

Via media should be the aim. Sona realised the mistake of making too much effort at a single point of time. Needless to say that the lesson drove home the truth of deliverance. Sona was able to get rid of fetters that make men worldly by evenness of effort. His mind was cleansed of the impurities that dog the ordinary mortals. Sona had become a Maha Arahant.

Buddha addressing the monks and laity declared Sona was most eminent in exertion.

He was rich so was his food;
His fragrant rice the Lord ate.
Effort his vigour made good
Till cautioned by the wise Sage.

17. KUTI KANNA SONA

To preach to the Buddha with acceptance is rare

This Maha Arahant was the offspring of a remarkable lady. His mother Kali was unique in having entered into the first stage of Saintship (Sotapanna) without hearing a sermon. The situation of her abode was singular. It was over which too powerful friendly demons met in air and conversed. Their names were Satagira and Hemavata who were commanders of their respective legions. Satagira was fortunate having heard the Buddha's first sermon in its entirety at the deer-park at Isipathana in Benares. The sermon struck home—as several hundreds of thousands of deities were, benefitted, Satagira had entered the first stage of Saintship. But his friend had missed the bus and Satagira was hurrying with his followers to impart the glad tidings. They met half way as Hemavata who was hurrying to meet his friend due to the unusual flowering at Himalayas. Both graphic and telling were the description of the Buddha and the narration of His sermon by Satagira nevertheless it bore no fruit in Hemavata's mind but it had in Kali's mind, as she overheard the conversation. She became a budding saint, a Sotapanna. The food that was meant for Hemavata became hers.

It was her destiny. So why should people despair if there are good preachers? Sona was born to her on that fateful day. He was called Kuti Kanna as he wore a pair of ear studs worth a million, as it was the custom for men to wear them even as now, in India.

His mother was one of the richest of women. He sought ordination from Maha Arahant Venerable Kaccāna who was residing in the district of Avanti. Each time the elder Kaccāna pointed out that it wasn't easy to be a Monk. But on the 3rd occasion, his teacher assented and Sona was ordained accordingly. Before long Sona became an Arahant. One day he expressed a wish to meet the Blessed One whom he had never met. His Teacher not only gave him permission but also made him a delegate to secure 5 boons on his behalf for the Monks in the Avanti district namely.

- (1) to give the higher ordination earlier than usual,
- (2) to wear sandals as the ground in the district was hard,
- (3) to bathe regardless of time
- (4) to make use of the skins of dead animals as mats.
- (5) to accept the robes irrespective of any limit

Sona had aspired in the Dispensation of Padumuttara Buddha to possess a sonorous voice. The Buddha requested Venerable Ananda thera to prepare a seat which was most unusual in His own fragrant shrine or perfumed chamber (*Gandha-Kuti*) for Sona. The Buddha was engaged elsewhere and returned early morning. Buddha requested Sona to preach. At the end of the sermon called "*Atakavagga*" Buddha praised Sona by acclaiming "*Saddhu Saddhu*". On hearing that Sona was only one year an Arahant and the reasons for his delayed ordination The Buddha extolled Sona who lost no time asking for the aforesaid five boons. These were duly granted. Then Sona offered a shawl a gift by his mother to be placed on the floor of the fragrant chamber. On his return to Avanti he duly reported to his teacher the success of his mission.

Thereafter, he proceeded to meet his mother who was staying at Kataghara and who was overjoyed on seeing him. The old lady advancing towards him asked him whether it was true

he preached to the Buddha and whether the Buddha said "Sadhu" "Sadhu" in approbation. Sona replied in the affirmative but inquired how she got the news. She replied that she heard from the resident deity. She requested her son to preach the same sermon to her having prepared for him a special seat.

The Buddha, on the evening of the day Sona left Him, addressing the Monks, declared that among his Maha Arahants Kutti Kanna Sona alone had the ability to preach in a resonant voice.

The wise Kali was his mother,
Sonorous was his voice,
To the Sovereign Lord he was speaker,
None else got such a choice.

18. SIVALI

He receives most who gives most

This Maha Arahant gave most in the past. He practised the art of Giving or Dana Parami to the utmost limit. He became in due course the Prince of Receivers.

Something notable in his career happened when he was born long ago in the Dispensation of Vipassi Buddha. It was at this time the King and his people were vying with each other in the art of giving. There was a festival of giving alms to The Buddha and the Noble Order.

It was a matter of healthy and pleasant rivalry. When the turn of the people came, they ran short of milk and honey. This food would pave the way for success in the alms giving. They kept a man to watch at the city gates with sufficient money. He came across a young man carrying what they needed. Buyer was anxious to buy. But the seller was not so enthusiastic. The result was bargaining with a vengeance. In the East bargaining is compared to poling of a vessel in the river. Bidding rose from a gold coin. The seller on learning of the almsgiving wanted to partake of the merit. On hearing that there was no impediment

he further inquired whether there was any one among them who could offer 1000 gold coins. On hearing there wasn't any, he said that the pot of curd and honey were even worth 2000 coins and that if permitted he was willing to give it free. The offer was accepted.

We are told that by the power of the Buddha, the curd and honey were found sufficient. On this occasion it was his aspiration that one day he would be the head of the recipients.

Thereafter, he took his conception in the womb of Suppavasa a daughter of the king of Kolia. Many were the windfalls that came to the lot of the family. The land became productive and the fields returned a record harvest. Whatever was given the receiver was amply satisfied. But both Mother and son were not immune from demeritorious action (Akusala Kamma) in the past. It was in the nature of worldlings. The birth of the child was delayed for 7 years instead of the period of 10 months. If it was a lesser child the result would have been tragic. Today a caesarean operation was the only solution. But in these far off days, Faith (Saddha) worked marvels. In the Buddha, people had a sure guide and Kalyana Mitta. Suppavasa naturally thought that she was at death's door. For at the end of the 7th year she suffered terrible agony. She then implored her husband to invite The Buddha and the Noble Order for an almsgiving. Upon being invited the Blessed One saw that both mother and son would be saved. He accordingly gave His blessing and at that moment the child was born. Great was the rejoicing. The husband who left his funereal home returned amidst scenes of mirth and joy.

Hence the name of Sivali was given to the son. Seven days almsgiving to the Buddha and the Noble Order followed. Sivali was thus a precocious lad.

After 7 days - or the 7th day of the alms giving, Venerable Sāriputta conferred with the boy. The gist of it was that Sāriputta enquired from him whether after going through such a painful time in the mother's womb, it would not be better for him to enter the Order. The boy assented. He was nearly 7 years old.

When his head was being shaved—at the parting of the first lock of hair, he entered the first stream of Saintship and gradually at the parting of the last lock, he had become a full-fledged Arahant. It was well known in the Noble Order that Venerable Sivali was foremost among recipients. Buddha in long and arduous journeys through forbidding forests counted on the presence of venerable Sivali. Unlike now, there were no shops, inns or rest houses on the way. The roads too, were in poor condition. Hospitality can only be secured through the intervention of deities and powerful demons.

Hence the Buddha addressing the Monks declared that among his Maha Arahants Venerable Sivali was foremost in receiving alms.

Seven years in mother's womb,
A prisoner in living tomb,
At seven double his age,
For gain supreme a sage.

19. VAKKALI

"Faith could move mountains"

THIS Maha Arahant was well known for his Faith (Saddha)

He was drawn to the Buddha as a piece of iron to a magnet. He, too, was born in the remote past when Padumuttara was Buddha who gave him the assurance.

He was born a brahmin at Sravasti in this Dispensation, and was learned in the Vedic lore. One day the Buddha was going round for alms when Vakkali saw Him for the first time. He became spell-bound. The vision of the Buddha gripped his mind.

The 32 main and 80 lesser manly attributes of the Buddha took him by surprise. None could be tired in gazing at the Buddha. There was no way of satisfying his gaze unless he went into residence at Jetavana Vihare. The only way to do so was to seek ordination. Accordingly, he met Buddha and asked for ordination. He was the first to be ordained by the Faith (Saddha) alone.

He got the opportunity he sought. Barring the meal time and calls of nature, he was ever with the Buddha. There was no devotion so great as Vakkali's to Buddha. His conduct was in contrast to the Teaching of the Buddha. Again and again, Tathagata has said that impermanency was inherent in everything. Buddha's body was no exception. The man's body comprises of various kinds of filth 32 in number and had 9 exits for matter to pass out. The Buddha did not wish to check Vakkali at once. For wisdom like wine requires time to mature. At last Vakkali's period of probation was over. Buddha emphasized that he was simply wasting his time. If he wished to see Tathagata he must understand his Dhamma (doctrine) and vice versa. Vakkali remained unmoved. The Buddha proceeded to go to Rajagaha to spend the "vas" season i. e. to spend three months during the rainy season. Chiding became necessary and Buddha reprimanded Vakkali. This filled the cup of his bitterness. He bent upon suicide. He accordingly repaired to Gijjakute hill or Vulture's peak. In sorrow he leapt from the Peak. The Compassionate Master was at hand. He sent a halo of His own person before Vakkali. He was thunderstruck. Here was the Buddha who had rejected and left him. His joy knew no bounds. Instead of gravitating to the earth, he found himself lifted high. The Buddha recited the verses beginning with 261st verse (22 of the Bhikkhu series) of the Dhammapala and stretched His forefinger towards Vakkali saying *Ehi Bhikkhu* "come here," Bhikkhu. This was the formula used in formal ordination of an Arahant. Remembering the verses recited by the Buddha and aided by good Kamma of the past he became a full fledged Maha Arahant and came down saluting the Lord.

No long after-wards the Buddha addressing the monks extolled Venerable Vakkali and said that among his Maha Arahants Vakkali was the foremost to seek ordination by virtue of Faith (Saddha) alone.

As a piece of iron to magnet,
Drawn was he to Sovereign Lord.
Homeless to be in Sage's net
An Arahant a willing ward.

20.—21. RAHULA AND RATTHAPALA

(1) *A diligent pupil is the darling of the teacher.*

(2) *None greater than he for faith (Saddha) in ordination.*

RĀHULA was a Maha Arahant foremost for the observance of precepts. The details of his life more or less coincide with those of the life of the Maha Arahant called Ratthapala. Born into wealthy families and though little was known of their previous lives, on coming of age like Sumedha of old, gave up their wealth. Both felt that it was foolish to amass wealth. They distributed the wealth among the poor to become hermits. At this time hermits enjoying psychic power one from the kingdom of the Naga whose king was called Pathavindara and the other from the heavenly realm of the 32 deities—(Tavatimsa) came to them. Each hermit had a pupil. The hermits not only gave the blessing but also extolled the virtues of their respective abodes. On death, each hermit was born in the region from which each hailed. One was therefore, born in Pathavindhara as king of Nagoes and the other as Sakka in the heavenly abode.

One day these persons met. Sakka on questioning the other found out that the other was far from happy as he was born among the creeping creatures. Sakka suggested to his friend now that Padumuttara Buddha was sojourning on the earth; he should go to meet Him. It was then that he met his counter part Rāhula and aspired to be one such.

The details of the assurance of Rāhula were similar to those of the other Maha Arahants. Then he met Sakka and broke the news to him. Sakka followed suit and aspired to be the counterpart of Ratthapala.

In this Dispensation Rāhula the son of Prince Siddhattha was born. When Gautama Buddha with the fine array of Maha Arahants visited the home town of Kapilawasthu for the first time, Yasodhara the mother of Rahula, who was only 7 years old pointing the Buddha to him, repeated a set of 9 verses (Narasia gatha) so called as they gave a description of the king of men from foot to head while the last verse gave a graphic picture of Buddha among His disciples like the resplendent Moon in the starry universe. Each Buddhist child had to learn these verses by memory.

Yasodhara was also known as Bimba Devi so called due to her rosy complexion. After her ordination she was known as Bhadda Kaccana. The mother requested the child to ask for the inheritance from his father. The moment they met the young Rahula was drawn towards the Buddha exclaiming "Oh, how sweet is thy shade" Rahula who was clamouring for his inheritance followed the Buddha all the way to the temple while the Buddha remained silent. Addressing Venerable Sāriputta the Buddha requested him to ordain Rāhula as worldly treasures would only prolong his samsaric existence. Instead the sevenfold Aryan Treasure, would be his on ordination. They consist in faith (Saddha) Virtue (Sila) sense of shame towards Sin (Hiri) and fear towards sin (otappa) learning often hearing discourses then unlike reading now widely prevalent (Suta) Generosity (Caga) and Insight (Panna) This led to an interesting sequel. King Suddhodhana was grief stricken to learn his grandson has been ordained. He hastened towards Buddha and laid bare his sorrow.

There was pathos in his lament. It was too much for me, to find you My Lord next Nanda and now Rahula, leaving home, one after another. This grief has penetrated to the very marrow of my bones. Please grant me a boon that hereafter without the consent of the parents that none of tender age would be ordained. It was readily granted by the Buddha.

By common consent, Rahula was a strict adherent to the practice of the precepts. He was also an admirable pupil. It was a custom of his every morning to throw up a handful of sand wishing that he should get as ample admonition as those grains of sand. The Buddha preached to him that he should not tell a lie even for fun. The sermon is called *Ambalathhiya Rahulovada Sutta*. The Buddha compared a liar to an empty vessel. Once on begging rounds Rahula who was 18 years old was with the Buddha and was soon comparing himself with the Buddha fascinated by their similarity. The Blessed One promptly checked him by preaching the *Maha Rahulovāda Sutta*. Vada here means advice. There was a touching story of Rahula spending one whole night at the lavatory used by the Buddha, being pressed for space. This was

due to the Blessed One promulgating a rule. It would appear that the laity had a habit of over staying in the temple for days to hear religious discourses. Besides, some came from far away places. Most of these people deport themselves in various repulsive ways while asleep. It was not proper that bhikkhus should sleep in their midst. It is interesting to record that in answer to a knock at the door of the lavatory by the Buddha, Rahula exclaiming "I Rahula" instead of simply saying the meaningless "It is I" which many would say.

The Buddha forthwith summoned the bhikkhus headed by Sāriputta, to narrate the episode.

The Buddha thereupon relaxed the rule so as to operate only after the third day. This became the ruling topic of conversation of the Bhikkhus. The Rāhula Thera the son of the Buddha was so modest and unassuming when he could be otherwise. Buddha having heard this narrated a small story called Tippalatthamiga Jataka of the past to show that Rāhula's character was so even in the remote past.

"Once upon a time, in Benares when Magada, the king was ruling Bodhisatta was a leader of a herd of deer. This leader had a young nephew and at the request of his mother, the leader undertook to teach and did teach him the arts and crafts by which they could outwit their enemies. One day the young deer was trapped. So he fainted and feigned to be dead. His stomach got puffed up and kept the breathing under control so much so that even the crows and flies were hovering about the body. The hunter taking the deer for dead, released the deer for making a meal of it on the spot. A fire was kindled. The young deer at once, got up and took to his heels".

Theragātha contains four verses said to have been uttered by Rahula. Buddha, addressing monks said that among his Maha Arahants Venerable Rāhula was preeminent for the observance of the precepts.

The story of the Venerable Ratthapāla was equally interesting. He was born in a place called Tulla Kotthita in the country of Kurus. Buddha visited this locality and was received with acclamation by the people. He was the only son

and heir known as Ratthapāla. His family was possessed of immense wealth upon which even the ruler depends in time of financial stringency. Hence the name. One day he listened to, and was converted by, a discourse of the Buddha. He asked for ordination. But he was told by the Buddha that he should obtain the consent of the parents as he was a minor. To obtain consent his character was revealed. The parents were against ordination as he was the sole heir of the family. They pleaded that he could become a very pious young man and use his wealth to advantage. But Ratthapāla was adamant. He had a strong saddha (faith) in his ordination. He fasted as did Ghandī many years later on different grounds to obtain the consent of the parents. The parents became alarmed as the seventh day was reached and implored his friends to save him. At last his friends suggested a compromise. For by giving consent they would save his life; The parents relented and Ratthapāla realised his wish.

Nevertheless it is said that he took 12 years to become an Arahant. The Buddha prevented Ratthapāla visiting his parents during his probation. The parents were sick of the bhikkhus. When Venerable Ratthapāla arrived the embittered father was shaving at the dressing table in the verandah and roundly abused the visitor. He never paused to consider that the bhikkhu might well be his own son. Those who are prejudiced are blind. So venerable Ratthapāla on going out spied the servant-maid, who was going to empty some food in the dust-bin. Venerable Ratthapāla requested her, if such was her purpose, to put the food in his bowl. Thus he broke no Vinaya rules. As soon as the maid saw his young master's hands and feet, she recognised him and lost no time, informing the parents. They could not believe their eyes. She was promptly set free; apparently there was slavery those days. Father came running to find Venerable Ratthapāla coolly consuming the meal. It was too late.

When Venerable Ratthapāla was asked why he did not enter his own house. The reply was that a bhikkhu had no house of his own and that instead of alms he received abuse.

So the giving of alms was put off for the next day. To atone for his lapse the brahmin got up a grand show. It was a vain bid for Ratthapāla was an Arahant. It was merely

vexation of spirit. Ratthapāla said on seeing piles of gold that wealth instead of being hoarded should be cast to the river as as it was a source of sorrow. To the women who were his former sweethearts he addressed them as "sisters" and they swooned. The Brahmin was determined to detain Venerable Ratthapāla even against his wish. But the Maha Arahant by means of psychic power escaped through the roof. Thereafter he went to the king's park. The royal gardener who was expecting the King on tour lost no time in breaking the good news to the King. For he recognised Venerable Ratthapāla. The king who who was styled Dananda Korauwa went to him. He too had heard of the renunciation of Venerable Ratthapāla at the age of 18 years. King said that for four reasons people renounce the world namely - (1) Old age, (2) Chronic sickness (3) Poverty and lastly (4) isolation.

But Venerable Ratthapāla was singularly free from all or any of them and asked him the cause for his early ordination. Venerable Ratthapāla said Lord Buddha had enunciated four Great Universal Truths. Having heard them he sought homelessness. These were the four —

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| i. Old age and death | ii. Unprotection |
| iii. Isolation at death and | iv. limitless greed. |

Each of the above Venerable Ratthapāla explained taking the King an object lesson.

Regarding the first the king had to explain that at the age of twenty he was physically very powerful in the arts and sciences of war. Today, at the age of 80 years, he was weak and weary and not very steady in his gait.

Regarding the second, the venerable Ratthapāla said that if the king had any sickness or any disability, he cannot part with it.

Regarding the third, Venerable Ratthapāla said that the various treasures the the king had would be left behind without any exception, on death.

Illustrating the fourth, the king was asked what his reaction would be if he found a neighbouring kingdom weak. The king replied that he could seize it. Further if he found a like kingdom beyond the shores, the king replied that he would seize that too. There was no limit to one's greed.

Moralising further Venerable Ratthapāla declared —

- (i) there were people blinded with ignorance of amassing wealth, but would give it to none but on the contrary would pine for more.
- (ii) there were kings who however extensive were their Kingdoms were anxious to annex more,
- (iii) people and their rulers alike actuated by greed multiplied their possessions. There was no satiety. They leave their treasures behind.
- (iv) There was none among the relatives or friends who could save a person from dying.
- (v) The living gladly get the possessions of the dead distributed among them while the dead were confined to the grave or funeral pyre and they secure a rebirth to suit their good or bad kamma. They reap what they sow.
- (vi) Neither old age nor death could be arrested
- (vii) Death was most democratic. Death was the great leveller whether high or low, rich or poor. The foolish tremble with fear while the wise face death calmly.
- (viii) Those who realised Nibbana were utterly free. Others in life and after life would roam incessantly exposed to all the hazards that flesh is heir to.
- (ix) The ignorant follow in the wake of people who take sorrowful re-birth. There was no end.
- (x) As in ancient days punishment was meted out to the burglar on the spot. So the guilty on the next birth would face punishment.

- (xi) The eye of man is fascinated by various sights. I have seen its utter futility.
- (xii) I have seen both young and old dying like tender and immature fruits falling.

Thus Venerable Ratthapāla summed up his sermon.

Buddha addressing the Monks said that among his Maha Arahants Ratthapāla was outstanding for having renounced the world by reason of Faith (Saddha).

The earth has not seen a pupil,
 So obedient and so fair,
 Father and son matchless pair,
 An Arahant under His magic spell.

The youth and wealth may be sung,
 He gave up the worldly laughter;
 The consent of the parents he wrung
 To gain the bliss he was after.

22. KUNDADHAṆA

He was the first to be invited for alms.

This Maha Arahant was the first among all others to receive invitation for alms (Salaka.) His path was not easy. A joke that impaired a friendship is fraught with grave consequences. The evil effect of the joke recoiled on him with relentless fury during life after life for many lives. He created a rift between two holy men viz: Bikkhus – a heinous crime.

Had he known the evil effects he would never have done so. Ignorance was the gateway to one's downfall. This is what is meant by the first link of Paṭiṭṭha Samuṭṭāpāda. It was in the dispensation of Kasyapa Buddha that he was an earth bound (bhummata) deity. It was the custom in that period for Bhikkhus to assemble for the confession of their transgressions at the end of every six months. The ceremony was called "Upāsatha".

The period differed from age to age. In the dispensation of Vipassi Buddha this occurred every evening. The two monks proceeded together for the ceremony. The deity in an evil and unguarded moment was moved to test the friendship with dire results. He waited till one monk gave his robes to the other and proceeded to the forest for a call of nature so that on coming back he appeared as if followed by a wanton maid with dishevelled hair and adjusting her dress.

The other was shocked and concluded that his friend was not the good monk he pretended to be. He had to believe his eyes. So he upbraided his innocent friend who was stupefied by the rebuke. Naturally when the ceremony of confession came round, the other Monk was unwilling to participate with his companion. The deity soon realised his folly. Now he sensed danger and promptly confessed, in the guise of an old man. On being questioned as to who he was he assumed the appearance of the deity and fell at their feet imploring their pardon.

The monks, thereafter, proceeded to the ceremony. Nevertheless, the deity could not escape thereafter the chain of evil reaction, he started. The friendship was shaken. For Life after Life, this deity if born as a human being was seen by everyone as shadowed by a woman amply decked with jewellery. So in this last life, it was his lot, though a Brahmin called Dhana well versed in Vedic Lore. In due course, he yearned for ordination in fulfilment of his destiny and he was accordingly ordained. But he could not shake off the apparition. So he was known as Kundadhāna i. e. Dhana who is followed by a woman. It made quite a stir in Jetawanarama where the Buddha Gautama was residing. This was duly reported to the chief male lay disciple Anēpīdu and then to the Chief female Lay-disciple, Visākha. But each refused to intervene saying that it was for the Buddha to decide. Then the monks instead of going to the Buddha went to Pasenadi the king of Kosala who decided to investigate the truth. On further research, he found that as soon as Kundadhāna ascended the stairs each time, the apparation vanished. The king came to the conclusion that the fault lay not with the Bhikkhu. He also found that the Bhikkhu has suffered privation by lack of food, for wherever he went, people

offered one spoonful to the Bhikkhu and another saying it was for the woman who was following him. So the King asked the Bhikkhu to repair to the palace each day for alms. But the whispering campaign grew and it led to charge and counter-charge. The Bhikkhu who was found guiltless by the King was not slow to hit back.

The result was a complaint made to the Buddha. On hearing from the bhikkhu what has happened the Buddha admonished him not to add further evil kamma. He laid bare the story of his past. This Maha Arahant having partaken good food from the palace and by dint of hard resolution and grim determination arrived at the further shore of Nibbāna. Meditation was the raft that took him to Arahatsip. The apparition vanished, thereafter.

It was at this time, that the daughter of Anēpidu viz. Chulla Subhadda who was married to a Hindu and who was at the town of Ugga invited Buddha for an almsgiving neither by post nor by messenger. It was simply by throwing a handful of Jasmine flowers which by reason of her great merit and by power of her exercise of Truth came and rested as a canopy overhead, at Jetawanaramaya where Buddha was preaching. The Buddha recognised the invitation of Culla Subhadda and requested monks to be invited for the ceremony. On these occasions, only Arahants participated. It was on this memorable event that Venerable Kundadhana came forward, springing up in the air-requesting as a right to receive first the invitation viz the (salaka) food ticket.

When Anepidu, the treasurer, invited the Buddha to an almsgiving for the following day, he was surprised to hear of his daughter's alms giving so conveyed by air as bar.

The Buddha addressing the monks praised Venerable Kundadhāna that among His Maha Arahants, he was the foremost to receive the invitation for alms known in Pali as (salaka).

Even for fun to separate friends
Holy, is without amends.
On monk shady spectre attends,
Till released at last from bonds.

23. VANGĪSA

He does not mince his words

This Maha arahant was very intelligent. He chose the right word to suit the occasion. In this Dispensation, he was born as a Brahmin called Vangīsa. He was versed in the Vedic lore. He won the affection of his teacher who imparted the secret of fore-telling the birth of any dead person by tapping the skull with his finger nail. Practice made him perfect. He drew crowds. He also got a following who got him a gold coloured garment and a shawl to match as well as a chariot. They organised a mobile caravan. Whereever he went the crowds more for curiosity than for devotion as now, followed him. Eventually he found himself at the gates of Jetawanaramaya where there were crowds on their way to the Temple. People said that Wangisa only could tell where the dead was reborn but not the reasons for such rebirth as Lord Buddha. So he told his followers of his intention to meet the Buddha. His followers warned him. None could visit the Buddha without coming under His spell.

But Vangīsa paid no heed. He went alone mixing himself with other pilgrims. The Buddha knew of his coming. He had three skulls ready for him. One was of a person who had taken rebirth in the animal-world, another of one reborn in the human world and yet another skull of an Arahant, who had done with rebirth.

When Vangīsa came, the Buddha gave one skull after another both of which he correctly predicted by intoning the same with the finger nail, the place of the rebirth. But when he came to the last skull, he was stumped. Try as he could, he was unable to say. Crowds were looking on. He was on his trial. Beads of perspiration were oozing from his forehead. At last, he confessed his ignorance and implored the Buddha to impart to him the knowledge he was lacking. But Buddha said that such knowledge is open only to the initiated. Hence his ordination was necessary. Being very intelligent, he took little time to become an Arahant. When his followers inquired from Venerable Vangīsa he informed them that his ordination was to learn a secret. Then the followers were anxious that he should resume. But Venerable Vangīsa

had done with all earthly tasks. He said that he had come to a parting of ways. When other monks having heard that Venerable Vangisa, was speaking as if he were an Arahant they reported to Buddha curious to know how Venerable Vangisa progressed so quickly.

The Buddha explained to them that the Elder Vangisa has fully mastered the why and wherefore of births and deaths of individuals. He has travelled the Aryan Eight Fold Path. He has got rid of all defilements. Such a person "I would call a Brahmin" The Buddha recited the verses 419 and 420 of the Dhammapada. Vangisa was a born poet. He had addressed poems even to the Blessed One.

Not long afterwards, the Buddha addressing the monks said Venerable Vangisa was foremost among His Maha Arahants in speaking the right word to suit the occasion.

On a dead man's skull
To tell future was his skill,
He was stopped by sage's skull
Till rescued by Lord's skill.

24. VANAGATA PUTTA UPASENA

He was the idol of people.

This Maha Arahant's name was Upasena. Vanagata putta was so called as he was a forest dweller. He was pleasing to all. In the art of pleasing, none could excel him. He was the younger brother of Sāriputta, the Chief Disciple. He was an eloquent preacher in his day.

He was born in the Brahmin village called Nalaka. One day he repaired to Jetavana to meet the Buddha with a companion. He was only two years whereas his companion was only one year a Bhikkhu. Upasena was too presumptuous. He erroneously thought that the Buddha would be too pleased to meet them. It was the custom of the Buddha to greet the Bhikkhus

and inquire about them. After the felicitations, the Buddha found out how forward he was, when he should be a pupil, he was acting the role of a teacher. The Buddha's strongest term of reprimand was "mogha purusha" or empty man which he used on this occasion. He promulgated a rule that only a bhikkhu who has completed the tenth year of ordination could be called a senior bhikkhu (upasampada bhikkhu). This rebuke to his Arahatsip was a spur.

He applied himself relentlessly to the pursuit of higher morality, by intense meditation. He realised Nibbana, and became an arahant.

In due course, Venerable Upasena had a large following. Various persons of good families were attached to him as he was a gifted speaker. They expressed a desire to be ordained under him. He said he was a forest dweller and they out of regard followed him. He set an example in the practice of austerities. (Dhutangas) which were 13 in number. Each Bhikkhu took upon himself to practise at least one, if not more. At the end of ten months, he had a following of 500 Bhikkhus.

It was at this time that the Buddha was contemplating going to a retreat for half a month when Venerable Upasena arrived with his followers to meet the Buddha. The Blessed One saw one of his followers wearing a pansakula robe. That was the robe made up of pieces of cloth picked up from the cemetery. In those days the dead were as a rule neither buried nor burnt. They were simply left in the cemetery with the shroud. Hence the cemetery is known as "amusohona" to the Singhalese. On Buddha asking the Bhikkhu whether he took delight in wearing the robe, he replied that he did so out of regard for his teacher. Then the Buddha praised venerable Upasena by acclaiming "Sadhu".

Things have come to a full circle. Upasena with much effort won praise. Not long afterwards the Buddha declared that venerable Upasena was foremost in pleasing others.

The forest claimed him as its own,
Good will none better to earn.
For others to follow a pattern;
Priase he got he has sown.

25. MALLA PUTTA DABBA

He was adept in arranging accommodation

This Maha Arahant hailed from Malla raja clan. His name was Dabba. He became foremost among the Maha Arahants for his dexterity in preparing and ordering seats for the visiting bhikkhus according to due rank.

After death (Parinibbana) of Kassapa Buddha, he was born as a human being. He and 6 others performed a remarkable feat for utmost daring and resolution. Bhikkhus were at that time easy-going and like everybody else, were on the decline. These seven persons who were bhikkhus thought of setting an example. They wished to be heroic. By means of a ladder, they climbed a huge rock, and having set aside the ladder determined to win or die in the attempt to win moksha. They started to meditate.

On the 5th day, one became an Arahant and by means of psychic power he went to Utura Kuru kingdom and brought food for others by going on daily rounds. Others said that it was outside the pact. They urged him to go back.

On the 7th day, another having entered the third stage of Saintship (Anagami) was born in the world of purity-Suddhavaśa one of the fine material spheres known as the pure heavens. Such saints short of Arahant-hood were born there and the other five were born in one or other of the six heavens belonging to Kama Loka and in the present Dispensation of Gautama Buddha, one was born in the royal palace at Gandara.

Another was born in the Pabathiya country. Another was born in the country of Bahiya to a queen, wife of Malla king in the town-Anupia. The queen before the child was born died at labour. Steps were taken to cremate the remains. At the funeral pyre something occurred out of the ordinary. The child who was alive, was miraculously saved and as the child rested on a burnt column of the pyre he was named Dabba.

None who is destined to be an Arahant in this life can die without fulfilling his mission. In his 7th year the Buddha visited Anupia town and Dabba as soon as he saw Buddha was anxious to join the Order. The guardians gave the consent and Dabba was accordingly ordained. As Elder Sivali before him,

by stages an Arahant he became on the last lock of hair being shaved. Then this seven year old Arahant thought as he had nothing more to accomplish of meeting the Buddha to obtain the favour of arranging board and lodging for visiting bhikkhus. This wish was the mainspring of an old resolution. The Buddha saw his destiny. As the office was great and as he was of tender age the Buddha made him a senior bhikkhu-upasampada Bhikkhu. The Elder Dabba was an adept. For worldings he gave seats in far off places by means of his psychic power. He required no lantern for his task as the fore-finger of his emitted light. He became quite proficient and became the talking point. Some have gained and others have suffered by his proficiency. The worldling bhikkhus could not hoodwink him. The discontented party looked for a scape goat to lodge a false complaint. In all ages the foolish were ready at hand to oblige. They found a Lichavi called Vaddha who was prepared to be their mouth piece. Vaddha made a false complaint that his former wife was in toe with the Elder Dabba. They did not reckon either with the power of the Buddha or with the Arahatsip of Dabba. They were doomed to disappointment. Vaddha remained unmoved at first. Venerable Ananda had to intervene. Vaddha had to fall down prostrate before Buddha and ask for pardon. Vaddha was guilty of a heinous crime called Patta Nikujjitha literally means 'bowl overturned' meaning Vaddaha has lost the solace of bhikkhu life, the crime consists of 8 kinds, to wit:

If to a bhikku is caused (1) Loss (2) Harm (3) His abrupt departure or practised to a bhikkhu (4) Harsh speech, or cause to a bhikkhu (5) Conflict or to talk disparagingly of (6) Buddha (7) The law and (8) The Noble order.

Not long afterwards the Buddha declared that among His Maha Arahants, Dabba was most proficient in preparing and ordering seats and their food to the visiting bhikkhus.

Though a child yet a giant;

Bristling with psychic might;

An adept in preparing seats,

To each due to his deserts.

Suddhavasā; The pure - Abodes are a group of five heavens belonging to the fine material world (Rupa lokas. loka) where only the non returners (anagami) are reborn and in which they attain Arahatsip and Nibbana (ariyapuggala) These pure abodes are AVIHA ATAPPA SUDASSA SUDASSI and AKANITTHA B. D. Nyanatiloka Maha thera.

26 PILINDHIVACCHA

The gods love him most

Prior to the arrival of Gautama Buddha in this world, he had been successful in reforming the lives of others in the cultivation of virtue. As a result some were born in the heavens and were grateful to their teacher and guide.

He was Pilindhivaccha. He was born at Sravasti a Brahmin. Having listened to a sermon of Gautama Buddha he was instantly converted. He sought ordination.

He had a habit of addressing all and sundry both in the Order and in the Laity by the term "Vasala" signifying a person of low caste. He had acquired this habit during 500 lives when he was born a Brahmin, for, Brahmins regarded all others as below them.¹ Pilindhivaccha could not get rid of this lapse by force of habit. It is said habit is second nature. In a person who had got rid of all defilements, still the habit acquired during a long period persisted. The Buddha was the sole exception. So when it became intolerable, Bhikkhus complained to the Buddha.

The Buddha explained to the audience what had happened. The Venerable Pilindhivaccha had no trace of hatred or ill-will when using the word. It was purely a habit. He had no venom. The Buddha proceeded to say Venerable Maha Arahant was free from all defilements. Such a person Buddha would call a "Brahmin". The Buddha recited the 408th verse of the Dhammapada.

One day a seller of "tippili" or long pepper ran into serious trouble. Knowing not who Venerable Pilindivaccha was, he was taking a waggon load of "tippili" for sale, having a sample of specimen "tippili" in a basket. When he met one morning the Maha Arahant at the gate of Jetawanarama proceeding on a journey, as usual, Maha Arahant addressed the seller as "Vasala" and inquired what the basket contained. The seller was dumb founded. He retorted by saying "meebeti" i.e. excreta of mice. "Be it so", said the Maha Arahant and went on his way. There was a striking similarity between long

pepper and excreta of mice and the seller to his horror discovered that the specimen and then the waggon in turn consisted no longer of long pepper but excreta of mice.

The deities saw to it that the goods were turned into excreta of mice, even though it caused distress to the trader. The trader's stock had sunk to zero. The poor man's grief knew no bounds. In desperation he sought the Thero to give vent to his anger for he felt convinced that he was the cause. He met a well meaning person who questioned him. On hearing the story, he explained to the trader that Venerable Pilindivaccha was a Maha Arahant and the remedy lay in his own hands. He was asked to meet the Maha Thera again in the same way as in the fateful morning and when addressed, in the usual way, to be careful to reply simply that they were "tippili". Then the Venerable Pilindivaccha would say, "Be it so". Then you would discover the true nature of your goods. The seller did so and was glad to retrieve his fortune for instantly the goods of the trader were in the original state by the same process.

Afterwards, the Buddha addressing the Noble Order and the laity declared that among his Maha Arahants Pilindivaccha was most pleasing to the Gods.

Though devoid of triple stain,
From habit he could not refrain;
His mode of Brahminic address
Though Aryan was past redress.

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1. Once a Brahmin called Aggika Baradvajs proud of his birth met the Buddha while setting out on a journey roundly abused the Blessed One thus "Stop shaveling stop monk finally stop Vasala" Buddha calmly replied "Do you know who is a Vasala or what makes a person Vasalaya? The Brahmin said he did not know and begged the Buddha to enlighten him. The result is a magnificent sermon called Vasala Sutta.

27. BĀHIYA DARUCIRĪYA

To the wise, a word is enough

Long preparation enabled this Arahant to grasp the Truth in the twinkling of an eye. Like Upatissa better known as Sāriputta — the Chief Disciple — who entered the first stage of Arahantship by hearing only one line of a couplet. The Thero on hearing a single sentence from Gautama Buddha became a full fledged Arahant. To do so was his unique lot.

He had done a lot of merit and was born in the latter part of the Dispensation at the Pari Nirvana, of Kassapa Euddha. He was one of the five who failed to gain a foot-hold on Saintship vide 'Life of Malla Putta Dabba (Sketch 25)

He was born thereafter in this dispensation of Gautama Buddha after enjoyment of much bliss in heaven. He was called Bahiya after his clan. He was a trader. He was on a harmless trip to Suvannabhumi popularly known as Burma. His ship was wrecked and he was the sole survivor. By clinging on to a log he swam to a place called Supparaka. As he had no clothes, he resolved to cover himself with some moss and bark and arming himself with an earthen vessel, he eked out an existence by begging. In due course he was idolized by the people who mistook him for an Arahant. People are always misled by appearances. When clothes are offered he refused thinking he would lose caste. This served to enhance his reputation. He was regarded as an Arahant. His dress consisted of pieces of bark fastened together. Hence the name Daruciriya. He passed off as an Arahant. Then his erstwhile companion who was in the abode of Suddhavasa heavenly world and who was an Arahant., thought that it was time to disillusion him. His friend came from Brahma world in an instant and stood before him in all the glory and majesty of a God. Bahiya Daru Chiriya could not believe his eyes and asked who he was. He unfolded to him the story of the past. He succeeded in convincing him that he should forthwith repair to Jethavanarama to meet the Buddha in order to learn the Dhamma. The very name of the Buddha was news to him; so great was his enthusiasm it is said that travelling all night without pausing and possibly

with the psychic power he covered 129 leagues to reach Jetavanarama to learn that the Buddha was out on His rounds as it was noon. He was asked to rest as he was travel worn. But he was in no mood to wait. He went in search of the Buddha and having accosted Him on the wayside, fell at His feet. The Buddha told him that the hour was unusual. But Bahiya was insistent. He is supposed to have told Buddha (a) How many meals one has missed in the countless round of births and deaths (Samsara) and (b) that one's death may occur at any moment — The latter turned out to be a prophetic utterance. The Buddha saw his past and felt that this was his last wish. He preached to him then and there one sentence the gist of which was to see things as they truly are "Ditthe ditthe mattam bhavissati"! He asked for ordination. The Buddha also knew that he was not fortunate in getting robes. He had not practised sufficient generosity (Dana Parami) specially in the giving of cloth; so it behoves everyone to perfect the ten paramitas. So the Buddha instead of saying, pointing out his finger, "Come here Bhikkhu" (Bhikkhu) asked him whether he had any robes. While searching for them here and there in the dust bins on the road an erstwhile enemy of his now a Yakka entered into the spirit of a young cow who gored him to death. Some sediment of evil Kamma remained. So his former enemy had the last say. His corpse was recovered lying on the road side and the Buddha got it cremated in a fitting manner. Not long afterwards the Buddha addressing the Monks and laymen declared that Bahi Daruciriya was foremost to gain the goal of Arahantship by grasping a single sentence.

Ever toiling ever hurrying
 To attain bliss ever trying,
 A word or phrase will not miss
 To let in undying bliss.

The 6 and 7 links of *Pattichche Samappade Passo* (impression) gives rise to *Vedana* (feeling) The Blessed one told Bahyia to stop at *Passo* only. In other words do not linger over what you see. Hence the 8 link *Thnha* (craving) and 9th link, *Upadana* (clinging) do not come into play.

28. KUMARA KASSAPA

Brilliant imagery in sermons.

The decline and fall are inevitable in all things. Even the Dispensation of a Buddha is no exception. There was such a decline in the Dispensation of Buddha Kassapa just as it is now in the Dispensation of Gautama Buddha. Seven Bhikkhus of resolute will and energy in such a time did a wonderful thing. By means of a ladder improvised for the purpose they got on to a rock which was otherwise inaccessible. Having pushed aside the ladder, they began to meditate either to win Moksha or die in the attempt.

On the fifth day one became an Arahant and by means of psychic power he went to Uturukuru kingdom in search of alms (pindapāta) His colleagues, however, declined to partake of the food so brought as it was contrary to the original resolution. On the seventh day another entered the third stage of saintship (Anagāmi) and was consequently reborn in the world of purity the abode of such saints (SUDDHAVĀSA) The other five who were born in one or other of the six heavenly realms were the following in this Dispensation.

Malla Putta Dabba (Sketch 25) became a monk and a Maha arahant. He excelled in preparing seats. Another was Bahi Daruciriya (Sketch 27) Another was Sabhiya (Sketch 79) Another was brahmin Pukkusati who became a convert by listening to the Blessed One. The fifth was the subject of this theme.

His mother was the daughter of a treasurer. She was fed up with this world. She implored her parents for permission to become a nun. But the parents refused. They were in good company with Shakespeare who on a later day wrote "But earthlier happy is the rose distilled than that withering on the virgin thorn, lives and dies in single blessedness".

She was dutiful towards her husband and was blameless in her conduct. One day her husband was startled by a chance remark uttered by her on her declining to take part in a festival

by donning the festive garb. She pointed out that the human body could be compared to a beautiful vase filled up with filth and covered up. Unaware of her pregnancy she obtained her husband's consent to be a bhikkhuni. Unfortunately for her, she walked into the fold of Devadutta who had created a schism in the Dispensation at the time and was running a parallel organisation. When the pregnancy could no longer be hidden, Devadutta fearing repercussions expelled her. As she entered the Order in the name of the Blessed One, she sought the Buddha. Ample justice was meted out to her. The Buddha was a born Parliamentarian. Although the Buddha knew she was innocent. She was given over to a committee of inquiry comprising of King of Kosala, Anepidu the chief lay disciple Visakha the chief female lay disciple who played a decisive role and presided over by Venerable Maha Arahant Upali the chief in the knowledge of Discipline (VINAYA). After full investigation the President announced that conception had taken place before she entered the Order and held her blameless. So she was permitted to remain in the Order and in due course a son was born and was named Kassapa.

The King of Kosala was passing by one day, when a child's cry from the direction of the nunnery roused his attention. He decided to adopt the child and hence the name of Kumāra Kassapa. But the child must play. For the slightest cause the boys chide one another. Truth leaked out that he was but an orphan. On inquiring from the king the child was referred to the foster nurse. He sought, knowing what has transpired, the king's permission to enter the Order. The king assented. The bhikkhu life he plied with utmost care and energy. It was nothing new to him.

He repaired to a forest known as "Andavana". It was so called because of the following story.

Long ago 500 robbers haunted the palace. They fell upon a day follower of the Buddha but withal a saint in the Anagami Stage. The news spread that he was collecting a large sum of money for the enshrining of a relic of the Buddha Kassapa. They committed the heinous crime of killing him. So great was

the demerit (Akusala) that in no time they one and all went blind. They wept and bewailed their lot. Their cries rent the air. The people therefore, associated the forest with blind men. Hence the name; the forest of blind men.

While Kumāra Kassapa was meditating in this forest, his erstwhile colleague from the world of purity appeared. Brilliant light heralded his presence. He presented an allegory, Taking as his text an anthill and a man of action armed with a spade; He began by saying the ant hill (1) emits smoke by night (2) and shines by day (3) The Brahmin (4) asks the man of action Sumedho (5) to take upon the spade and start digging the ant hill. The operation is earmarked by nine stages thus; a weapon (6) is first unearthed. The persistent digging (7) then a door (8) comes into view. A swollen blue coloured frog (9) is next thrown up. Thereafter a sign board with two directions (10) followed by a strainer (11) a tortoise (12) then a log with a butcher's knife (13) come into view. Then a piece of raw flesh is revealed (14) lastly there remains only the Naga Rajah or King Cobra (15) who should be left severely alone.

For the meaning of the allegory the deity on leaving referred Kumāra Kassapa to the Omniscient One. No exposition could excel that of the Teacher of gods and men. With this story ringing in his ears he could not sleep on that fateful night. Early morning he repaired to the Blessed One. the Buddha preached to him the *Vamikka Sutta* named after the ant hill (Vammika).

The ant hill (1) is compared to the human body consisting of four primary elements. They are the solid (*Patavi*) the fluid (*Apo*) the heating (*Tejo*) and the vibrating windy (*Vayo*) elements. The four are universally present in every material object in varying degrees of strength. Wherever one element predominates over the three others the object is noted by that element. For example if the solid element dominates in any material thing, it is distinguished by being called *Patavi*. The earth is a good illustration. Fire in respect of *Tejo*. Water in respect of *Apo*. The air in connection with *Vayo*. But the three other elements are present nevertheless in each case. Our bodies, therefore, have all the four elements. Out of

the 32 impurities comprising the human body the solid element claims 20 while the watery element 12. The bodies are kept alive by the heating and windy elements. It is as true a statement as Huxley's "all dirt is matter". The ant hill (1) is prone to change. It is exposed to the hazards of the weather. Even so the human body is vulnerable to disease. The human being is scheming schemes and dreaming dreams in the night just as the ant hilsmites by night (2) By day he puts the schemes and dreams to action even as the ant hill shines by day (3) What does the Brahmin imply? Fictions, however, pleasant Buddha avoids. The Tathagatha offers the word to the world in its pristine purity. The Brahmin is shorn of its corrupt currency. He applied the word Brahmin to the highest being and in its context the word means no other than Buddha Himself. What does Sumedha (5) mean? It means a real conqueror. His conquests are true and lasting. They are the true triumphs of the mind. They belong to the traveller on the Aryan Path. He belongs to one or other of the four pairs of saints in the Dispensation of the Buddha. What is understood by a weapon? To a follower of Buddha, wisdom whether mundane or supermundane enjoys the highest place. There is the classic story of the Gordian knot that baffled so many in the past to unravel. The problem was solved by Alexander the Great cutting it with the sword. The meaning becomes clearer when one becomes free by cutting off the shackles of ignorance by the sword of wisdom. In this context one thinks of tangles within and without of Visuddhi Magga. Wisdom grows by practice even as the weapon becomes sharper by constant use. Digging further (7) means effort of mind (Samatha) and analysis Vipassana. Such efforts culminate in coming across the Naga Raja the personification of Arahantship (15) Door bar (8) means ignorance, the chief root of Evil. It is because of this ignorance or Avijja that we are a prey to the countless number of rebirths that is associated always with suffering. Once ignorance is removed then Nibbana is realised. Swollen blue coloured frog (9) is the symbol of Hate. It is the opposite of Metta or loving kindness. A person obsessed with hate does nothing but bad. The sign board with two directions (10) means simply the good and the bad or figuratively Heaven or Hell. In the words of the Dhamma they mean kusala or akusala

actions. There are two beautiful Pali words brimful of meaning Appamada and Pamada. It is a sign that spells doubt. In the Dhamma, Doubt is a stumbling block. It is a eightfold. Doubt towards the Buddha (a) Dhamma (b) Sangha (c) Past birth (d) future birth (e) both past and future birth (f) validity of the precepts (g) and the Law of dependent Origination (h) Doubt is the opposite of Faith or confidence. Like the captain of a ship in the mid ocean who has lost his bearings and has lost all the instruments does not know which way to turn for safety. If one is possessed of Doubt he is lost in Samsaric existence. Like the monkey who goes from branch to branch he gets birth after birth ad *Infinitum*. The strainer (11) prevents bigger particles from passing through the sieve. Even so are the five impediments to Nibbana. They are called *Nivaranas* in Pali. They are the sense desire, illwill, sloth and torpor, associated in like manner restlessness and brooding and lastly *Doubt* just mentioned. Tortoise (12) represents the mind (*Nama*) and body (*Rupa*) Mind is fourfold viz. Feeling (*Vedana*) perception (*Sanna*) all other mental states (*Sankhara*) and lastly the mind (*Vinnana*) The log and the butcher's knife (13) refer to *Kāma Vastu* and *Klesa Kāma*. To illustrate, a man pines for a car the act of pining is called *Klesa Kāma*. When he gets the car the car is *vastu kāma*. This applies to every object of desire Men are willy nilly drawn to *kāma*vastu by *klesa kāma*. They suffer in consequence just as the meat is chopped by the butcher on his log. A piece of raw flesh (14) clings to any solid with which it comes into contact. So beings are drawn towards Samsaric existence by twin central forces of Ignorance and Desire. Nagah Raja (15) is the embodiment of Nibbana where the persistent digging or effort culminates.

To Kumara Kassapa the sermon was a revelation. It threw into relief all that lay buried. The ideal that was before him for 100000 kalpas was at last realised. The wealth of meaning unfolded by the sermon gave realisation to Nibbana that so long eluded his grasp. The bewildering variety of imagery fascinated him who through the ages was pining to be skilled in dilectics, the Buddha Padumuttara's prophecy has come, as with all prophecies of all Buddhas, true. Kumara Kassapa has no equal among his peers for dilectical oratory.

The Payasi Sutta preached by him bears witness to this special skill. But that is another story.

With winged words of light,
Coming from rare insight.
Bringing all under thy spell,
In stating Dhamma so well.

29. MAHA KOTTHITA

Deeply versed in the four attainments of an Arahant.

This was a Maha Arahant who was well versed in the Four Discriminations (Patisambhida). He made it a point to discuss these wherever and whenever an opportunity arose with the other Maha Arahants notably with Venerable Sāriputta the Chief of them all. The Buddha, too, was consulted.

He thus became a master and knew the subject from A to Z. The Pali words are (1) Attha (2) Dhamma (3) Nirutti and (4) Patibhāna. To each is attached the word *Patisambhida* meaning discrimination. The first Attha refers to Meaning. The second Dhamma refers to the Law. While the third Nirutti means philology or the language pertaining to the first and the second. Lastly the fourth Patibhāna means Sagacity in respect of the first second and third. Thus these discriminations are interlinked and inter-dependent. Like the Four Noble Truths in the first sermon of the Buddha or like the Triple Gem they always go together. It is interesting to observe that the first means the knowledge as to the result of a cause while the second means the knowledge of that cause. In Buddhism all be they animate or inanimate, are the effects of causes. Only Nibbana the goal of every Buddhist and space (Akasa) are the two glorious exceptions. It was because of the perfect logical analysis of the Blessed One that His Doctrine is known in Pali as 'Vibajja Vada'. It was this key note that provided the vision splendid to Venerable Sāriputta then Upatissa when he heard the memorable stanza from Venerable Assaji a bhikkhu who heard the Buddha's first sermon—vide sketch 1.

The third refers to the language particularly the Pali language or the language of the Magadha relating to the first and second. The fourth refers to Sagacity in respect of the first, second and the third.

The special knowledge is the prerogative of an Arahant who had trod the path of Samatha and Vipassana meditation as described later in this article. But Venerable Ananda Thera though only a Sotapanna in the first stream of saintship had enjoyed this gift due no doubt to his specialised knowledge of the Law. So had Kuduttara a saintly lady. They provide the exceptions to the general rule. The "Therīgāthā" an excellent book contains spontaneous and joyful utterances of the nuns who had become Arahants. It is a companion volume to "Theragāthā" in respect of the sayings of the monks. In it the Chief Disciple the elder Sāriputta proclaims the excellence of this specialised knowledge or discrimination.

The Samatha meditation has 40 subjects given by the Buddha. This in contrast to Vipassanā meditation i.e. the meditation that helps persons to attain Arahantship by the simple but nevertheless the hard way through "Anicca or impermanence or transitoriness "dhukka" a difficult word to translate, generally speaking; it means unsatisfactoriness of life and "anatta" literally means no soul. Such Arahants have no psychic power and hence are called "Suska Vipassaka" or literally meaning dry eyed Arahants — a notable example being elder Cakkupala.

In contrast Samatha must inevitably end with Vipassanā where the practitioner is always in possession of psychic power with the four attainments or discriminations known in Pali as *Siupili Simbiyapat*. The following are the 40 subjects of Samatha meditation:

(One) Anapana Sati or sustained consciousness on breathing in and breathing out.

(ten) Kasinas or concentration of mind on mind made objects with the help of external aid.

- (ten) Asubhas or developing insight by means of concentration on the ten stages of gradual impurity of a corpse.
- (One) Kayagatha Sati or mindfulness on the 32 constituents or impurities of the human body.
- (ten) Anussatti (the last two are Eka Sanna Sati and Eka Dhatu Vavatthananus Sati).
- (four) Formless stages or Four Arupas viz:—
- (1) Akasancayatana—the sphere of space
 - (2) Vinnanancayatana—the sphere of Consciousness
 - (3) Akincannayatana—the sphere of nothingness
 - (4) Nevasanna-nasannayatana—the sphere of neither perception (nor) non-perception.
- (four) Four Brahma Viharas—Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekha.

For detailed study vide Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice by Paravahera Vajirannana Maha Thera PhD. (Catab.)

Each subject is called a Kamatthana. The Buddha is a perfect Physician as He alone is capable of administering to the mind diseased. Hence His prescription or the choice of Kammatthāna invariably answers.

Not long afterwards Buddha extolled Maha Kotthita as supreme among His Maha Arahants in the four attainments.

The mantle of the Disciple
Sits softly on thee a while
The learning to perfection,
In art of discrimination.

30. ANANDA

None could rival him in serving the Buddha.

In the 20th year of enlightenment the *Buddha* felt the need of having an attendant. There were 8 such Bhikkhus up to that time. But each in turn became a dismal failure. Each has missed the vocation. Before the venerable Ananda therā assumed office as attendant to the Lord Buddha the following theras acted from time to time; 1. Nagasamala, 2. Agita 3. Upawana (69) 4. Sunakkatta, 5. Chunda Sanuddesa, 6. Sagata (39) 7. Radha (9) 8. Meghiya (67) Sariputta the Chief Disciple was quick to offer his services so was Mogallāna the other Chief Disciple. Various other Arahants offered, in turn, their services, but in vain.

Then the Bhikkhus present felt that Venerable Ananda who had hitherto remained silent should speak. Then the Buddha informed those present that Venerable Ananda knew his destiny, Ananda thereupon offered his services but conditioned by four restrictions and four requests. The former 4 were:

- (a) That he will not share the food, nor
- (b) The robes offered to the Blessed One
- (c) That he will not stay in the fragrant chamber of the Buddha.
- (d) That he will not accompany the Buddha on invitation.

The latter 4 were: for the Blessed One—

- (i) That he will act as Secretary to make appointments
- (ii) That he will be the Usher
- (iii) That he would be empowered to ask any question to clear any doubt.
- (iv) That the Buddha will preach to him any and every discourse that was preached to anyone else in his absence.

The last was by far the most useful and far-reaching.

When the Buddha inquired for the reason of the 4 restrictions Ananda replied that their absence would give rise to gossip among the wicked and regarding requests it would be futile to be the attendant unless he had the power to make appointments and be the usher and posted up in the Dhamma.

For 25 years the unique role which Ananda undertook was discharged with a rare distinction up to the passing away of the Blessed One, and no wonder. He saw his like in the dim distant past when Padumuttara was the Buddha. His great resolution to play the self same role was ripening into fulfilment. Ananda is mentioned in various Jataka stories under various names. He had an inquiring mind and he never hesitated to question the Buddha even when he smiled. He was thus instrumental in sparking off many a discourse by the Blessed One. His intervention in the ordination of women and championing their cause made the nuns to support him.

One day a request was made by Anepidu the chief lay disciple that in the prolonged absence of the Blessed One from Jetawanarama at Sravasti the modern Sahiet, many members of the public go away disappointed throwing away the offerings at the gate. Hence it was necessary that Venerable Ananda should approach the Blessed One to set up a suitable shrine at Jetawanarama. Buddha addressing the Venerable Ananda spoke thus. So long as the Tatagata is alive it was not possible to enshrine a relic but it was different in the case of the Bodhi-tree under whose shade the Tatagata received enlightenment. The Buddha readily agreed to the proposal of the Venerable Ananda to obtain a seedling from the Maha Bodhi Tree at Buddha Gaya and plant the same in the Court yard of Jethavanarama. To get this done, untouched by hand and through the air for that was the condition imposed by the Buddha, Himself, the services of the elder Maha Mogallana were helpful and the Great Thero when so requested readily obliged.

With great pomp and ceremony the seedling was planted by Venerable Ananda under the patronage of the King of Kosala. To this day this tree-known as Ananda-Bodhi-stands

in the Courtyard at Jetawanarama as a silent memorial of the multifarious activities of Ananda Thera. But the Bodhi Tree needs attention today.

None felt the passing away of the Blessed One so keenly as he. His loss was inconsolable. For he lived closest to the Buddha. While his services were exemplary he has reached only the first stage of Arahatsip unlike others who have reached the goal. So he repaired to a nearby Vihare called Mandalamala and wept bitter tears. The Buddha recalled him and consoled him. The services rendered to the Tatagata in person and so diligently were more than ample to enable him to reach the goal of Arahatsip. The Buddha also enumerated the great qualities of head and heart of Ananda combined with a winsome face. He was called Ananda because he brought joy to his kinsmen.

Finally he ended by saying that the Dctrine (Dhamma) he has preached would be to him a guide and a teacher in the future and that he would ere long enter Arahantsip while he was neither standing, reclining, sitting or walking. It was a remarkable prophecy which was fulfilled to the very letter.

The elder Maha Kassapa was getting ready to convene the first Council called Dhamma Sangayana under the patronage of King Ajasattu at Rajagaha in the third month of the passing away of the Blessed One. It was universally felt that the convocation would be a failure in the absence of Venerable Ananda. So learned was he that he was known as the Treasurer while Sariputta who was no more was known as the Commander of the Law (Dhamma) (vide life of Maha Kassapa - sketch 4).

At the same time, it was generally agreed that the Council should consist only of Arahants, so it was a daring experiment of the Elder. Maha Kassapa to select 499 Arahants leaving a vacancy to make up the 500 - the full strength of the Council. For he had an eye on Venerable Ananda. Time was fast coming to a close and the opening day was imminent. None the less Venerable Ananda had more to do with the callers among the laity than the mental struggle in which he was engaged. This incidentally is particularly true about the learned monks today.

There was a deva at a nearby tree who wished to lend a helping hand by admonishing him. That it was time for him to play his dual role in the first Council as a representative of the Sakyan race and to take a leading part in the proceedings. So, back he went to the Vihare and on the day previous to the meeting of the First Council while he was about to recline on the bed, after long and strenuous walking peripatetic (Sankamana) Meditation as soon as he raised his legs and was about to lay his head on the pillow his mind underwent the great transformation of an Arahant. The earthly ties he had were for ever cast asunder. It was a cataclysmic change. Illustration given is like the flowering of the banana tree. The fever and fret of life that is the outcome of greed, hatred and delusion left him for ever. Ananda was now an Arahant.

At the first Council, his services were second to none. He recited the Sutta Pitaka with the preamble "Thus have I heard" 'Evam Me Sutam'. It was clear that he wished to be in the background putting the "Ipsissima verba" of the Master. He lived to a ripe old age of 120 years and passed away between the banks of the river Rohini. He was thus able to avert the dispute between the two sections on each bank. Each section was clamouring for the entire relics. His body was burnt out by spontaneous combustion in the air and the relics fell by one half on either side of the river. That he was a lover of Peace was shown even by his last act.

The Buddha spoke of Ananda as being outstanding in five matters:

1. Erudition
2. Good behaviour
3. Retentive memory
4. Resoluteness
5. Personal attention to Buddha

Ever at the call of Duty
In service so rare and lofty;
Men marvel at thy memory,
To give the Law a summary.

31. URUWELA KASSAPA

A brahmin born leader of men who forsook his household gods to follow the Buddha.

This Maha Arahant's name was Uruwela Kassapa. He was so called because he was ordained at Uruwela. He was distinguished for an immense concourse of followers, others, too, had followers. But their number unlike in the case of Uruwela Kassapa was on the wane.

He too, has obtained an assurance from the Buddha Padumuttara in the remote past. The details devetail with those of other Maha Arahants. In the Dispensation of the Pussa Buddha, he was born as an elder son to King Mahinda. The King had to go to a distant part of the country to quell an uprising. So he was appointed his deputy and he had the assistance of his two younger brothers in giving the four requisites to the Buddha.

He had three Ministers at that time. They were well known in this Dispensation of Gautama Buddha as King Bimbisara Visakha the Chief female lay, disciple and Ratthapala who became a Maha Arahant. He and his two brothers were born in this dispensation as Uruwela, Nadi and Gaya Kassapa. They were prominent brahamins, with 500, 300 and 200 followers respectively. With the increase from 5 to 60 Arahants Gautama Buddha addressed himself to missionary effort. He said "*Go ye forth, oh Bhikkhus for the welfare and happiness of many*" Let not two take the same path.

Buddha himself proceeded to Uruwela. The Buddha knew that none but He could convert such a prominent and powerful leader like Uruwela Kassapa. It was a mission worthy of a Buddha.

Buddha asked for permission to pass, one night in his cell, where sacrificial fires were tended, if that does not inconvenience him.

He replied that he did not wish to trouble the visitor as there was a fierce and powerful cobra.

Again and again he asked for permission to be met with the same reply. Finally he relented when the *Buddha* said "What if your Cobra did not harm the visitor—would you allow the visitor to stay? It was a fearful encounter in which the *Buddha* remained unscathed. It was like the taming of Nandopananda—a huge cobra King gifted with psychic power by venerable Moggallana under the directions of the *Buddha*. When the turbaned followers (*Jatilas*) of Uruwela Kassapa saw the encounter, they were aghast. They invited the *Buddha* to be their guest. But to convince the chief of Brahmins of the futility of tendering sacrificial fires was by no means easy. For at the end of each psychic feat he extolled *Buddha*, but nevertheless, muttering to himself that however great the *Buddha* may be, He was not an Arahant or holy like himself. He was obsessed with his own greatness. No wonder—because he had such an immense following.

Gradually the mind was softened towards the *Buddha* who grasped the opportunity.

Addressing him, He said "You are not the Arahant that you pretended to be. For you are ignorant even of the road that led to Arahantship You are certainly Not on that road".

Then Kassapa fell at the feet of the *Buddha* and asked for Ordination. Then the *Buddha* realising that he was the Chief and Leader of 500 followers, requested him to consult his followers. They one and all declared that they were willing to be ordained under such a being as The *Buddha*—just as their Leader was willing.

So they threw off their turbans (hence they were called *Jatilas*) and shaved their heads with the result his brothers Gaya Kassapa and Nadi Kassapa who were living by the river hurried on the scene curious to know what was happening. They were confronted by the *Bhikkhus* who were their erstwhile brother and his followers. Likewise they followed suit. At last, the *Buddha's* efforts were crowned with success. Ultimately at Gaya the *Buddha* preached to them "Adittha Pariyaya" Sutta. Everyone of them became Arahants. In the end there was a concourse of 3000 Arahants. As Uruwela Kassapa was a

leader of men, there was a doubt whether he was a follower of the Buddha, or vice versa. The Buddha then requested Venerable Kassapa to resolve their doubts.

The Buddha's supremacy was acknowledged seven times by Uruwela Kassapa by springing into air and coming down worshipping the Buddha. People wondered whether anyone could be greater than the Blessed One.

It was then that the Buddha kept the promise made to King Bimbisara by paying him a visit. Sakka King of the gods disguised as a young man headed the procession not only to clear the road but also to keep the crowd in good humour by reciting verses in praise of the Buddha.

He fulfilled the task so well – people were wondering at the antecedents of the stranger. Then he confessed who he was and said what a privilege it was for him to do so.

Not long afterwards the Buddha addressing the monks declared that Venerable Uruwela Kassapa was pre-eminent among his Maha Arahants as a leader of many followers.

The task of taming the leader
Was the lot of the Teacher.
Though among men he towered,
The Sage he revered.

32. KĀLUDĀYĪ

"Where others failed, he succeeded in his mission"

This Maha Arahant had the unique honour of being the first in inducing the relations of the Lord to embrace the Faith. He was with King Suddodana right through the period of six years during the absence of Prince Siddarta. He made light the absence of the Prince.

After performing many a meritorious deed, he was born at Kapilawastu as a son to a minister of king Suddhodana on the very Wesak Poya day when Prince Siddarta was born. He was a close associate of the Prince Siddarta.

The Prince had 7 treasures by birth viz:

- (1) The Bodhi tree under which he received enlightenment.
- (2) His Queen Yasodhara.
- (3) The 4 great treasures.
- (4) Arohaniya – the royal elephant.
- (5) Kanthaka the royal horse
- (6) Channa – the Charioteer and
- (7) Companion this Kaludayi.

Udayi because he was pleasing to all and Kalu because he was darker than others. Hence he was called Kaludayi. Nicknames of the Great have no sting. Truer the name the more exact it becomes.—Vide Angulimala, Kunda Dhana, Lakuntaka, Bhaddiya, to mention only a few.

After the Enlightenment, The Buddha was at Veluvanarama at Rajagaha. King Suddhodana after an absence of over six years was pining to see his son. So he sent minister after minister each with a retinue of 1000 followers requesting the Buddha to return. In all, he sent 9 ministers. But none of them returned. One and all sought ordination and became Arahants. Yet they forgot their mission – Finally he dispatched Kaludayi the most trusted follower. Kaludayi and his followers, as others before him became Arahants. The wish of the king was uppermost in his mind. He bided his time for a suitable opportunity. He waited till Nature became auspicious for such a journey. Kaludayi gave the hint and Buddha was pleased to oblige. The concourse that attended Buddha was about 20000 Arahants. Kaludayi heralded the visit by coming through the air with the bowl in hand. The King was glad at the good news. He got the bowl filled up with exquisite food and requested the Thera to partake of the food then and there agreeing to offer food to the Buddha.

After the Thera did so, the King repeated the act. The Thera agreed to the King's request that he should come every day and repeat the process until the arrival of the Buddha.

And every day the Thera preached to the King by way of thanks. It was a merit offering. (Punna-anumōdana)

Not long afterwards the Buddha addressing the Monks and laity declared Venerable Kaludayi was foremost in the Noble Order, for inducing relations to embrace the Faith.

Though he obtained supreme bliss,
The mission's end he did not miss,
The family bliss he did wish,
The king's trust was not amiss.

33. BAKKULA

"None healthier than he"

This Maha Arahant was noted for his freedom from disease.

He was so named because he had a double set of relatives.

He was a Brahmin learned in the Vedic lore in the very remote past in the Dispensation of Anoma-dassi Buddha. He was dissatisfied with his lot and he betook himself to the Himalayas as a hermit. There he acquired the five-fold knowledges and eight-fold practice, vide Sketch 64. He was a bigoted person. He came now and then to The Buddha and listened to His sermons but he was unconvinced. For instance it was like the early career of the Venerable Uruwela Kassapa in this Dispensation.

However, one day having learnt that the Buddha was ill, he procured all the available herbs in the Himalayas suitable to effect a cure by his psychic power and while offering the same wished to be reborn always as one free from disease. In the Dhamma Pada the Blessed one has said - The greatest gain is to be immune from disease. (verse 104 of the Dhammapada 7)

After many a meritorious deed, he was born in the Dispensation of Vipassi Buddha. He became a hermit and acquired psychic power. He listened to The Buddha again and

again but still he did not join the Noble Order. It was while on his visits to the Buddha, that he found some monks ill. He acted as the purveyor of medicine by his psychic power and the monks were cured. Thereafter he was born in the city of Benares in the Dispensation of Kassapa Buddha. One day he got ready the carpenters and masons and was coming from the outskirts of the city with waggon loads of material to build a residence for himself when he came across a temple in ruins.

He resolved to abandon his own enterprise and instead repaired and renovated the temple. He did this to perfection and even got food ingredients and medical herbs for the use of the resident monks. Thereafter performing many a meritorious deed, he was born in a treasurer's family in the city of Kosamba. In this Dispensation the mother according to the prevailing practice got the baby bathed in the river Yamuna by his foster nurse. As ill luck would have it a huge fish came from somewhere, having swallowed the child, disappeared. The foster nurse was horror stricken and helpless. She hurriedly ran to the mother to unfold the tale of woe. In the meanwhile the fish became maddened by the precious cargo in its belly swam upstream and was caught by some fishers at Benares in the morning. They paraded the streets of Benares carrying this huge fish with the upset price of 1000 gold coins thus keeping away all bidders at lesser sums. Evening came and lengthening shadows heralded the night. The fishers were weary and exhausted. The fish was now a burden to be got rid of at any price. The fish was knocked down for a song to a treasurer's family at one gold coin. Greed thus gave way to grief. The servants were away on leave. It was unusual. Yet such things happen. For every effect there was a cause. She being new to the job was cutting the fish most gingerly when a babe of golden hue was revealed underneath the outer skin. The baby was alive and was rescued. The child was all the more welcome as the treasurer's wife was barren. Such news travels fast. The parents having learnt how the baby was found came to the conclusion that the baby was no other than their own son. This claim was hotly contested and the King of Benares after hearing both sides gave judgment giving each in turn the right to own the child for half the year. It is not reported when he received the assurance from a Buddha although he was

a contemporary of the two chief Disciples. He was brought up in the lap of luxury. He was remarkably immune from disease. While Buddha was on a visit to Kosamba City he was in his 80th year able to listen to the Buddha and was duly ordained. The double set of relations saw to it that he got the four requisities in ample measure. If he wished to go on rounds (Pinda Pata) as was expected of the)bikkhus, the relations were ready at the gates to offer the food. In this way Venerable Bakkula Thera lived up to the record age of 160 years. He had the unique gift to delve into the remote past as two Chief Disciples and Bhadda Kaccāna. The Buddha addressing the monks said that Venerable Bakkula Thera was supremely free from disease.

Supremely free from disease,
Lived with comfort and ease,
Seer with inward vision past,
Doubly born with relatives vast.

34. SOBHITA

He delved into the past

This Maha Arahant was able to recall his past lives in order of succession for a period of 500 kalpas.

In this Dispensation he was born at Sravasti in a brahmin family. He listened to a sermon of the Buddha. He sought ordination and was ordained. He proceeded to Bandumathi where he sang the praises of the Buddha by a set of verses. Ere long he became an Arahant.

He was gifted in the power of recalling the past in succession. Of his immense past he could thus go as far as kalpas of time up to the time when he was born in the Rupa world, that is where body is born by means of Jhana power. He is said to be an exponent of Abhidhamma.

Buddha addressing the Bhikkhus, and the laity declared that the Elder Sobhita was foremost in the Noble Order for recalling the past lives in order of succession for a longer period than any other. A seer with prophetic vision. He, too, obtained the assurance from Padumuttara Buddha.

To thou revealed the past
The unexplored regions vast.
The prophetic mantle you wear,
The verities you laid bare.

35. UPALI

He was unrivalled in the knowledge of the Discipline.

He was a barber by profession. He was the royal barber. He accompanied the royal princes of Sakkyan birth who were six in all. They were Bhaddiya, Anuruddha, Kimbila, Bagu, Dewadatta and Ananda. Each distinguished himself. But Devadutta fell by the way side. By common consent Upali was ordained first so that according to precedence the princes had to pay respect to him and were thus able to pocket their pride. Thus caste distinctions were spurned by the Noble Ones. The Buddha concurred. It is said that in a former birth he insulted a Pacceka Buddha but though forgiven he could not escape altogether the evil effects of his Kamma. Hence his birth in a barber's family. He was seeking to be a forest dweller. But the Buddha dissuaded him from doing so. If he were to be with the Buddha he would have learning to his credit. He listened to the Blessed One who taught him the whole of the Vinaya Pitaka and he was doubly rewarded. He became in no long time an authority on Discipline or Vinaya. There are five books on Discipline (Vinaya). They are Maha Vagga Pali 2 Chula Vagga Pali 3 Parajika Pali 4 Pachittiya Pali and 5. Pariwara Pali.

The Doctrine of Buddha could be classified into three divisions or baskets which is the meaning of the word *Pitaka*. They are Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma which could be further reduced to the Law and Discipline. Tipitaka meaning literally three baskets is the word for the whole of the Dhamma.

At the first convocation was held three months after the passing away of the Blessed One, it was this Thera who gave to the world the Vinaya (Discipline) Pitaka.

The Buddha addressing monks declared that Venerable Upali was foremost for the knowledge of Discipline or Vinaya. What he had aspired under Padumuttara Buddha so many kalpas ago had been realised.

For Discipline none is so great,
His birth in the Order was laid.
His word had the greatest weight,
When Vinaya was relayed.

36. NANDAKA

He was most proficient in laying bare the Law to the Nuns.

This Maha Arahant became proficient in preaching to the Order of the Nuns. His felicity of phrase had a special charm for the Nuns.

He was born in this Dispensation and was ordained as Nandaka Thera. He became a successful preacher. He was a born orator. It was at this time Sakiya and Kolia were ready to go to war over a dispute about the distribution of waters in the river passing through their realms. Today between Pakistan and India or Sudan and Egypt disputes have arisen over this vexed question. After The Buddha had successfully preached to the tribes, he took upon himself the task of strengthening the Faith of 500 Sakiya Nobles and gradually had them brought to the fold of Arahantship. Their 500 wives also entered the Noble Order through Maha Pajapati Gotami and it was the custom that a monk should each in turn instruct them.

When his turn came he was shy to preach. For these wives once comprised his harem, in a previous life when he was a king. For some of the Maha Arahants would discover the fact by their own superior knowledge. So he sent a deputy instead. The Nuns, expected his arrival. The Buddha, too, was attracted by his preaching.

Buddha intervened. Elder Nandaka did preach with such good effect that everyone of the 500 Nuns entered the stream of Arahatsip. They became Sotapanna. This fact was brought to the notice of Buddha by the Nuns themselves. Buddha knew that they would progress further to Arahatsip, if Nandaka Thera continues to preach.

So Buddha directed the Nuns to the Thera Nandaka who was able to preach with such telling effect that they, one and all did reach the goal of Arahatsip.

The Buddha compared the first sermon of Venerable Nandaka to a crescent moon and the second sermon to the full moon.

Buddha addressing the monks and the laity, declared the Elder Nandaka Thera had no peer in the Noble Order for preaching unto the Order of the Nuns.

He saw the weakness and strength
Of ladies and was their shield.
He spoke to them at length,
What a power he did wield.

37. NANDA

A pupil Buddha alone could train

This Maha Arahant was the son of Maha Pajapati Gotami and therefore, a step brother of the Buddha. He was noted for his skill in subduing the senses. His feat was all the more remarkable as he was love sick. The Buddha offered him a singular celestial fare which captivated him provided he plied sincerely the bhikkhu life.

He was named Nanda as he was pleasing to the relatives. The Buddha visited the home town of Kapilavastu with a following of 20,000 bhikkhus for the first time. It was on this occasion that the Buddha caused rain and wished that each one would remain dry or wet as he or she pleases. It is an unheard of

phenomenon in the history of the world of physic. The Buddha preached to the host of relatives the Vessantara Jataka which is being recited in some Buddhist homes when death has visited them to assuage the grief. This is the story of Bosat practising generosity (Dana Parami) to the highest pitch when as a king by the name of Vessantara he gave his son and daughter of tender and lovable age to a loathesome Brahmin who asked for them. The king's grief was great but of obtaining by so doing omnipotent or universal knowledge of a Tatagata was greater. Prince Nanda was at this time celebrating the house warming, betrothal and coronation by a triple ceremony. Would people of today have the good sense to have their birthday parties and other ceremonies blended into one. People in the early days have a better sense of economy than now.

The Buddha attending the function recited the Maha Mangala Sutta. This may account for its being recited now on festive occasions. Love sick Nanda out of respect followed Buddha. "Come back, come back" cried his sweet heart said to be the prettiest in the kingdom. Expecting to be relieved at any moment Nanda reached the temple gate with the bowl in hand. He out of respect consented even to be ordained. But his heart was far away. He told the truth to the Buddha when questioned. Unlike other physicians the Buddha could minister to a mind diseased. The Buddha knew his Kammattana that is the meditation which invariably answers. The Buddha arranged, therefore, a visit to Tusita Heaven so called because of the thirty three gods living there. He took Nanda with Him by means of psychic power. On their way the Buddha pointed out a burnt monkey lying on the scorched earth. On arrival Nanda could not believe his eyes when he beheld the nymphs that waited on Sakka, the king of the gods. When the Buddha questioned whether there is a similarity between his Sweet Heart and any of the nymphs who are noted for their pink feet. Nanda uncharitably compared his sweet heart to the burnt monkey they saw on the way. Nanda was now smitten by overmastering passion for the possession of nymphs. The Buddha saw His opportunity.

Buddha solemnly promised him 500 of these fairies if only he plied in earnest the bhikkhu life. At Jetawanarama Nanda became the butt of ridicule as the news spread. This made him

all the more anxious to succeed in Bhikkhu life. In so doing he had an incomparable Teacher in Buddha. With practice perfected his sickness was completely cured. He became an Arahant.

This was broached to The Buddha by a deva one night flooding Jetavanarama with light. The Buddha had already understood the change in the pupil. On the following day venerable Nanda absolved the Buddha from keeping the promise of giving him celestial brides. The Buddha said "who ever has got rid of ignorance would not wallow in the mud of defilements or would not give reign to the senses "The fellow Bhikkhus refused to believe that love struck elder Nanda had so soon arrived at the goal of Arahantship. The Buddha said that Nanda's mind that was like an ill thatched roof now was completely rethatched and rain-proof.

This topic was freely discussed by the bhikkhus in the hall when the Buddha arrived. Taking as the text the jataka story the Buddha gave the story of Nanda's past; There was once upon a time a merchant prince called Kappata. He was a travelling merchant if not a pedlar. The sole means of his transport was a strong and wiry donkey. One day the business carried the merchant to Taxila. The merchant released the donkey until business was over. The donkey was rambling about for food when he came across a female of the species who instantly fell into conversation with the donkey. The curiosity of the feminine mind was roused when the donkey narrated his powers but was disappointed to learn that remuneration was inadequate to his deserts. She dropped a hint or two and soon they fell in love. Now the owner after the day's task was over came in search of the donkey and suggested that it was time to depart. But the donkey who was mad in love refused to budge. Then the owner thought of making use of fear to move the donkey. He used threats that were of no avail. The change of behaviour of the obedient to the utterly sullen donkey came as a rude shock to the merchant. On looking round for a cause he saw the donkey's sweet heart hovering about in the background. The merchant promised to find a suitable stable mate on returning home. The donkey relented. The donkey on arrival reminded

the merchant of his promise. The merchant was willing but there was one hitch. Whether there was a wife or not or whether there were offspring or not the food given to the donkey would be the same.

How the newcomers are going to live or not was not the concern of the merchant. Then the donkey got alarmed as any shortage of food was to the donkey in the nature of a calamity. The donkey absolved the merchant from implementing the promise.

The donkey was Nanda; the female of the species was Janapada Kalyani and the merchant was none other than the Blessed One.

Nanda was in his day handsome. He was only four inches shorter than Buddha.

The Omniscient One addressing the monks and the laity declared that Nanda was pre-eminent in the Noble Order for subduing the senses.

Between two loves he was one,
When Lord came to brother's aid.
Sage was free from promise made;
Sub-duing the senses he won.

38. MĀHA KAPPINA

Clever in admonishing the bhikkhus.

This Maha Arahant was the ablest in the Noble Order for admonishing the bhikkhus.

Once upon a time there was a weaver's wife going to Benares when she met eight out of 1000 Pacceka Buddhas and inquired for the reason of their coming. They mentioned that they came to meet the king but they were going away as the king was pre-occupied with the sowing festival. She was full of Saddha or faith. She invited them for a meal on the following day. When she was informed of the full strength

she said that the village consisted of 1000 weavers and each weaver could attend to the needs of each Pacceka Buddha. She improvised a hall in the centre of the village.

She was the live wire of the movement. She requested, entreated and cajoled all of them to build one room each and to give alms. For three montas they gave alms to the thousand Pacceka Buddhas culminating in the offer of robes their hand craft to each Pacchea Buddha.

Thereafter they were born in heaven and once again they were born as human beings in the Dispensation of Kassapa Buddha also in the role of weavers. On their visit to the Buddha they were wet to the skin by a shower of rain, as being strangers they had nowhere to go for shelter. They built a monastery for 20000 monks and gave alms for 7 days ending with a offer of a robe to each monk and a golden hued robe by the wife of the leader with flowers to match placed at the foot of the Buddha with the aspiration that she would be reborn with the skin of like colour. On death the leader and his wife were reborn as king Kappina the Great in the city of Kukkuṭa-wathie and his queen the same Anoja with a golden complexion. The fellow weavers were born as his ministers.

The king was hankering for news. This was prior to the era of news papers. He dispatched 4 riders each morning in the four cardinal directions to get the news of the Triple Gem of which he was after. But no news came. One day he himself mounted his charger called Suppina and with his retinue of 1000 ministers all on horse back galloped to his pleasure park. He spied five hundred merchants much fatigued by their journey proceeding towards the town. They were returning from Sravasti. The king hailed them and promptly inquired for the news. They unfolded a picture that gladdened his mind. They said "Oh Majesty there is at present at Jetawanaramaya the Omniscient and Compassionate Buddha". He offered on the spot 100000 gold coins for the unprecedented tidings. He asked for further news. "Oh Majesty, the same august Teacher does preach the Dhamma splendid at the beginning, in its progress and at the end". The king gladly repeated the offer. On inquiring further, "Oh Majesty" they replied "there are at

present illustrious sons of the Buddha headed by Sāriputta very wise and simple, and Mogallāna pre-eminent in wonder working powers—the two Chief Disciples—other disciples of the Blessed One comprising the Noble Order, the Sanga. The king was over-joyed and promptly repeated the offer again. The king's mind was now turned towards Jetavanaramaya and he told his ministers that he had decided to go there. They fell in with the king's wish. The king sent word to the queen Anoja of his reward and his impending departure through the merchants. The Ministers likewise informed the wives.

The queen on hearing the news with over-powering faith (Saddha) increased her own bounty three fold when she heard of the Triple Gem: Buddha, Dhamma and Sanga. The merchants were richer in the result by 12 lakhs of gold coins.

There were no bridges in these days. The king and his entourage had to cross three mighty rivers the first of which is called Aracco. The king nothing daunted implored the unlimited powers of the Triple Gem and spurred his charger. So did his Ministers. The truth of the sincerity of purpose was shown by the horses springing across and the king and his ministers found themselves on dry land. Likewise they surmounted the other two rivers called "Nilavahini" and "Chandrabaga". The Buddha anticipated their arrival and preceded as far as the thither bank of the last named river. To venerable Kassapa The Buddha did likewise. Vide Skekh 4 to the King seeing the Buddha was believing. The Blessed One saw their mighty past and preached with telling effect. They had only crossed the first stream of Arahantship (sotapanna).

When the queen and her followers similarly arrived, the Buddha made all the others invisible to them and preached till they likewise entered the first stream of Arahantship. While the minds of the erstwhile group ripened into Arahantship by the same sermon. No wonder they one and all sought ordination. The Buddha repeated the formula "Ehi Bhikkhus" Come Bhikkhus for the ending of sorrow and to lead the glorious life. They were instantly transformed into the guise of full fledged bhikkhus.

It was reported to the Buddha that Maha Kappina Thera was always exclaiming "Oh how joyous, Oh how joyous". The worldling bhikkhus mistook that the former king was recalling his past he once enjoyed. They informed the Buddha. On being questioned by the Blessed One Maha Kappina Thera said the Buddha knew that he was extolling the joys of an Arahant, besides which the kingly joy pales into insignificance.

He now and then was enjoying the bliss of Nibbana or the fruits of Arahantship by entering into Nirodhi Samapatti. Generally it lasts for not more than seven days.

The Blessed One has pointed out that Thera Maha Kappina should make use of his undoubted talents to admonish the bhikkhus. The Buddha declared in no uncertain terms that the subject of this chapter was the ablest in admonishing bhikkhus in the Noble Order.

No news was to him so great,
As Triple Gem of utmost weight.
None greater than he to admonish.
Turns to bliss for ills to banish.

39. SAGATHA

Most able to taste the bliss of Nibbana off and on.

He was born in this Dispensation near Jetawanarama in a brahmin's family and was named Sagatha. He was ordained. He became proficient in the art of getting into Jhana based on the heat element (Tejo). At this time there was a ferryman an old Brahmin who lived in the District of Kosamba who died breathing revenge as a result of a feud between himself and a new entrant in the ferry service.

He was born as a powerful serpent (nagarāja) who had psychic power. By means of this power he was able to bring about rain in season and out of season, with the result the farmers suffered great privation by the failure of their crops.

This Thera having learnt that the Buddha and his retinue were going there and would be spending a night, quickly went to the heart of the serpent and sat still. The serpent was highly incensed and sent up a cloud of smoke. The Thera did likewise only a wee whit better. The serpent who is prone to anger emitted flames of fire to extinguish the Thera but the latter not to be out-done sent up bigger flames of fire. Then the serpent thought the game was up. He had met with his match. He crouched before the Thera asking to abide by his grace. The Thera replied that there was one greater than he viz. the Buddha whose protection he should seek.

By this means, Thera was able to teach the serpent a salutary lesson. The serpent did not try his pranks any more and the people once again enjoyed prosperity.

The people were not unmindful and lavished on this Thera rich gifts of food. But then the people who were enjoying alcoholic drinks did not wish to partake alone without sharing with their benefactor. The Thera, still in the making of an Arahant got a goodly fill while going on rounds for food (pindapāta) and became drunk. He fell by the way on a rubbish heap. Buddha sent for him and dwelt upon the dangers of alcohol the besetting vice and the gateway to evil. The Thera unconsciously while prostrate had the feet towards the Blessed One. The Buddha prohibited the use of alcohol to the monks and laity alike. The 5th precept was born.

The reaction was telling. Thera worked hard unceasingly. He plied the bhikkhu life and in no long time he became an Arahant. The Buddha addressing the Monks and Laity said that Venerable Sagatha Thera became most proficient, in the Noble Order for entering into trance (*Nirodha Samapatti*) on the heat element (Tejo).

He taught the Naga a lesson
The people's affection he won.
Got for alms a potent brew,
The fifth precept he drew.

40. RADHA

Though old he became a willing pupil.

This Maha Arahant was a willing and apt pupil in the Noble Order. His ability to understand the *Dhamma* was most marked. He was born at Rajagaha modern Ragjin in a Brahmin's family. On growing old his children neglected him. He felt disgusted of life and was anxious to be ordained. But none of the bhikkhus was prepared to do so as he was old and decrepit. One day he sought the All Compassionate Master the Buddha, who saw his destiny.

They fell into conversation. The old brahmin confessed. Then Buddha addressing the monks questioned them whether any of them would remember any act of service by the old brahmin. Then no less a person than the Chief Disciple of the Buddha Sāriputta rose to say that old gentleman was kind enough to offer Venerable Sāriputta a spoonful of rice meant for him. An act of kindness however small, is ever remembered by the Great. Gratitude was one of the noblest traits. This is the special quality of the Blessed One. Venerable Sāriputta on being questioned readily offered his services to have him ordained. He became a very apt pupil. His conduct was exemplary. In the very letter and spirit he obeyed Venerable Sāriputta to the full. As he was a late entrant, he ranked last in order and in consequence his share of the food was scanty. Nevertheless, Venerable Sāriputta by means of his tractability made concerted measures to over-come the handicap. One day, Buddha, on inquiry learnt from Venerable Sāriputta all about the obedient pupil and that he had become an Arahant. This topic became the central theme of conversation. The Buddha, as usual, arrived in the midst of bhikkhus in order to get an opening to unfold the past of venerable Radha in relation to his teacher Sariputta and Buddha.

Once upon a time about 500 wood cutters were working on the slopes of the Himalayas. One day they came across an elephant who had an aching foot. The elephant was suffering from a stake stuck into his foot. But he was helpless to get rid of it. Thus the elephant followed the woodcutters and

when they began to run away the elephant stopped and then the woodcutters stopped. The elephant once again advanced towards them.

This went on. The woodcutters thought there was something behind this conduct. Then suddenly the elephant rolled on one side showing the stake. So the cause for the strange conduct was clear and the men who were possessed with tools had no difficulty to pull out the stake. The elephant's relief was immense. The animal was grateful. Thereafter the elephant was in the forefront of their work. The nature of the work made the elephant exceedingly useful. It was merely the old age that prompted the animal to retire. But not without leaving a substitute. He left behind a son a young tusker who duly took his place.

As the woodcutters could not refrain from talking about the tusker even in the city, the king of Benares came to know about the young tusker. He was anxious to take charge of the animal. But the tusker refused to budge unless the men, his owners, were adequately rewarded. The king made the tusker his royal (mangala) elephant. At that time the Bosat was born as son to the king who died.

The king of Kosala thereafter invaded the kingdom of Benares and the son of the king of Benares known as Alina-Citta fearing defeat wanted to retire to the hills. But the royal elephant nothing daunted charged into the midst of the enemy and wrested the king of Kosala alive and brought him back to his master Alina-Citta. The Elephant who was cured was Venerable Sāriputta. The young tusker was Venerable Radha and the King Alina-Citta was Buddha Himself.

The Buddha addressing the bhikkhus and the laity alike declared that Venerable Radha was the most proficient pupil to grasp the Dhamma in the Noble Order.

The age could not wither his aim,
The senses could not maim;
Able led he made head way
By stern will he won the Way.

41. MOGHARAJA

Wearing rough robes was nothing to him.

He was born as a son to a minister before the arrival of Kassapa Buddha. The following was the story of the past. There were 16 wood cutters perfect in their craft. Each had 1000 followers. Their services were engaged by the king of Benares. One of them became so excellent that he contrived a wooden bird which could be propelled and made to fly in the air, a remote parent of the modern aeroplane. The others followed suit and all of them made off to the slopes of Himalayas to carve a kingdom for themselves and their families. The leader became king and was styled Kasta Vahane so called because of the flying vehicle he has made. He selected a council from among his followers. Soon the king got into touch with the king of Benares and correspondence followed. One day the King of Benares sent a message written on gold leaf extolling the virtues of the Triple Gem. On hearing of the presence of Buddha the king Kasta Vahana made instant preparations to meet the Tatagata. He was joined by his followers. But they were doomed to disappointment as Buddha Kassapa by that time has passed away. The followers whom he sent first brought back the dismal news. He decided to do the next best thing. That is to observe the five precepts and on poya days to observe the higher morality Uposatha Sila to practise generosity and if possible to lead a Bhikkhu life. The subject of this Article became ordained as a monk. He led the Bhikkhu life for about 20000 years the average life span in that age. The king Kasta Vahana was born in this Dispensation and was called Bavari and his followers including Mogharaja were born as his friends. On the death of his father Bavari was appointed Counsellor (Purohita) or in modern parlance the Prime Minister to the king of Kosala. His son Pasenadi confirmed him in this post. After some time Bavari and his followers forsook the worldly life to become hermits in the royal park. He therefore bears a striking resemblance to Kaladeva—vide Sketch No. 49.

At the request of his followers, Bavari left for a suitable spot on the bank of Godavari river between the kingdoms of Kosala and Alaha, where the king of Kosala erected a monastery for him. Further the taxes amounting to one lakh paid by the people were offered to Bavari to further the cause of charity.

One day there was a domestic rift between a brahmin and his wife over the question of a servant. The wife requested the brahmin to procure money from Bavari to get her a servant but by that time the funds have been exhausted. Nothing daunted the brahmin threatened to have the head of Bavari split into seven parts by a mantra or charm unless the money was forthcoming.

A deity who lived near by pacified Bavari that the mantra of the brahmin would not work. But he could give no assurance the Buddha except Bavari determined to meet the Buddha.

He summoned the former 16 leaders associated with him when he was king Kasta Vahana and requested them to meet the Buddha and place all the facts before Him down to the splitting of his head by the enraged Brahmin by means of a mantra.

They were at a loss to recognise the Buddha. Bavari gave the identity card by mentioning the 32 manly attributes of the Buddha. But the delegation swelled in numbers as it progressed. Buddha anticipated their coming. Jetawanarama, He felt inadequate for the reception to so mighty a host. He selected a more commodious place at Rajagaha. Buddha proceeded there after taking care to leave His foot print at Jetawanarama. This is a method adopted by Tatagata to denote not only His presence but also to serve as an invitation.

But by the time they arrived at Pahan Vihare the numbers have swelled. The Buddha felt that a single discourse would never be able to resolve the doubts of each and every one. The Buddha proceeded to practise the method of question and answer. Individuality is the key note of Buddhism. Mass conversion is, therefore, out of question. The Buddha invited the leaders to put questions one by one. Mogharaja though a leader was unable to catch the eye of Buddha till one but the last. The pride of self esteem received a rude shock when his turn came. The answers of the Buddha to his questions left no room for doubt. None the less he was anxious about the ability of his leader to grasp the truth. This doubt is one of the five impediments to the realisation of Nibbana viz. Vicikiccha. He stopped at the third stage of Sainthood viz. Anagami. Later he managed to over-come this doubt and became an Arahant.

Buddha addressing the monks referred to Mogarāja as one in the Noble Order who is foremost among those who wear rough robes.

The roughest garments he wore,
Brilliant was the vedic lore.
Piety and learning in the blend
Brought about the journey's end.

42. WAPPA

Of the five persons being the band of the five elders (Pancha Vaggia Bhikkhus) to whom the Blessed One preached the first sermon this Maha Arahant was the second. It makes no difference whether he was the second or the third as there was some dispute about it. These five bhikkhus were the vanguard. He was born as a son to brahmin Vassettha at Kapilavastu. He got wind of the news that the prince Siddhatta was about to become a Buddha. He, therefore joined Kondaṇṇa with three others in leading the life of a hermit ready to receive the word. There was a wide spread and persistent belief that the Path to Deliverance lies through abstinence. The prince at first shared this view. But after repeated experiments with these monks of which the Buddha had given us a detailed description and at which the world stands aghast, he gave up this practice in favour of the Middle Path. He thus disappointed the fellow monks who left him. At Gaya prince Siddhatta became the all enlightened Buddha under the shade of Asetu tree later to be called the Bodhi Tree by reason of the Enlightenment.

The Buddha remembered his erstwhile fellow-travellers. The noble quality of gratitude was ever in the mind of the Master. Men like Alara Kalama or Udaka Ramaputta were intellectually gifted enough to receive the Doctrine. But at the moment they were not in the land of the living. So he had to fall upon these five ascetics to unfold the noble doctrine. Besides it was their lot. He preached the memorable sermon in the deer sanctuary called Isipatana near Benares where these ascetics were sojourning. It was the Esala (July) full moon day.

Between the two extreme practices of ascetism and gratification of senses He propounded the Noble Middle Way. The Buddha alike condemned the rigours of ascetism by subjecting the body to the cruel abstinence and the revelling deep in the delights of the senses. The sermon went home to the ascetics. The leader Anā Kondaṇṇa entered into the stream of saintship (Sotapanna). The resolution he made in the dim past during Padumuttara Buddha came to pass when The Buddha preached to them the "Anatta Laccana Sutta" or the sermon on non-soul. He became an Arahant. Having arrived at the goal, Venerable Wappa's joy was immense. In the midst of blind worldlings (Potujjanas) the elder Wappa extolled the virtues of the Middle Way.

The second of the five elect,
The Order's vanguard so select.
Among the first to win the Way,
His unique place none will gainsay.

43. BHADDIYA

The third of the vanguard of the Buddha's army

The nucleus of the Arya Sangha or the Noble Order was supplied by the five monks headed by Anā Kondaṇṇa to whom the Dhamma was unfolded by the Blessed One in the first sermon delivered at the deer park at Isipatana near Benares. They had the opportunity of serving the prince Siddhattha after he has renounced the royal pomp and glory in search of the Truth. It was well known that the erstwhile royal Prince endured all manner of hardships for practically six long years before his efforts were crowned with success. The Buddha found no royal road to enlightenment by practising austerities. He hit upon the Middle Path. He found that his five companions did not agree that Moksa is to be found outside the pale of severe asceticism. How the efforts were crowned with success and at Gaya under the Bodhi Tree, he received enlightenment fill a glorious page in the Life of the Blessed One.

The Buddha was in search of an human audience to deliver the First Sermon. He hit upon his erstwhile five companions who had served him most faithfully. When they saw The Buddha returning, their faces fell as they thought that the erring member is now returning thoroughly disillusioned. But soon their doubts vanished and soon they were preparing to listen to Him.

Only their leader Añña Kondañña saw a glimpse of Nibbana just as one saw an article in the night by a flash of lightening. The four others were still in darkness. The Buddha gradually instructed them by chats at the fireside. Finally at the next sermon called Anatta Laccana Sūta which he delivered all of them became Arahants. In this sermon the Blessed One pointed out that there was no such thing as an unchanging permanent entity in any being called a soul (Atta). Bhaddiya had been pining for the attainment of this ideal in the dim remote past under Padumuttara Buddha. He was the third of the five monks not only to be admitted to the Noble Order but also to be an Arahant. Long before the two Chief Disciples entered the Order these five monks in accordance with their aspiration and the prophecy of the Buddha had become Maha Arahats.

Ever and anon with the Lord,
A miracle to cross the ford,
Singled was he for the honour,
By dim prophecy's tenor.

44. MAHANAMA

To be in the front rank was the lode star of his life. Ever since he saw his counterpart during the time of Buddha Padumuttara he was ever anxious to fulfil his destiny. He was assured by such an august personage as a Buddha that he would fill the role during this Dispensation even though 100000 kalpas must elapse. During that period he had to practise the ten paramitas set out in the introduction. He was a keen student. He mastered Vedas of Brahminical lore. He was not satisfied. That was the reason why he joined Añña Kondañña with three others at the

deer park at Issipatana near Banares. People do not renounce for nothing. There was a spiritual urge of upliftment. An inner urge pointing to a goal. Prince Siddhatta, too, after his renunciation joined them. They left that the erstwhile prince was too much steeped in gentility to undertake so lofty a goal as Moksa. But the same erstwhile prince returned to them as the greatest being that the world has ever known. He had come to rescue them from the rut they had fallen into. The first Sermon that the Blessed One preached stamped the visitor as the greatest teacher and the most powerful orator whose like the world has not seen. This was followed by homely talks until the Blessed One delivered the second sermon known as Anatta Lakkhana Sutta supplementary to the first. Nothing could delay the fulfilment of his destiny. He was numbered among the first five Arahants who entered the Noble Order.

In accents so sweet and sonorous,
He heard the Law so gracious.
For ages to this he was alive,
In the order's vanguard of five.

45. ASSAJI

He opened the door for the Chief Disciple

He was the last but by no means the least of the five bhikkhus who formed the vanguard of the Noble Order.

His life followed closely the pattern of the other four monks. These five were enamoured of the ideal just as their five counterparts showed the way during the Dispensation of Padumuttara Buddha. History or prehistory was repeating itself.

He had the unique distinction of being the first Arahant to show the way to Upatissa the Brahmin afterwards to become the Chief Disciple as Elder Sariputta. He quoted the stanza which became world famous in the Buddhist world. The stanza afterwards became known as Assaji stanza. At first Assaji tried

to put Upatissa off on the plea that he was a novice. But Upatissa insisted to hear the gist of the Dhamma whether it was long or short. What was engraved in the thousands of the Buddhist votive shrines in India he said "Of all things that proceed from a cause, the Tathagata has told—And also how they cease to be this too, the Great Seer did unfold". In other words the Second hird Truths in the first sermon of the Buddha were revealed. It simply means that The Buddha not only showed how a being came into existence but also how that existence could cease for ever. If there is a craving there must be a ceasing thereof. To Upatissa it was like opening a door to a familiar room. Before the second line was quoted the truth flashed before his vision and he entered the stream of saintship. Soon Upatissa became the Chief Disciple. His was a rare intellect only second to The Buddha's.

It was said that actuated by the noble quality of gratitude ever afterwards the chief disciple slept wherever possible with his head turned towards the direction of the place where Venerable Assaji his teacher was said to be so-journing. The deportment of Assaji while going on rounds for food was so striking that it moved a great being like Upatissa to go closer to him.

He was of the five the last,
But to point the way the first.
To Upatissa the Lord's chief,
Dhamma's Commander in chief

46. KIMBILA

The nobility embraced the Order.

An aristocrat to his finger tips, a Sakyan nobleman, a kinsman of the Blessed One, since the days of Padumuttara Buddha he had enjoyed every royal comfort. From heavenly planes to earthly life every conceivable comfort was his. Finally during this Dispensation he was born to a Sakyan royal family. King Suddhodana the father of the Prince Siddharta was much perturbed that his royal house had not hitherto provided

adherents to the Blessed One. He went about canvassing support. At last, six Sakyan princes accompanied by their barber Upali set out to meet The Buddha. Kimbila was in that august company. It was felt that if they failed to do so, their kinship to the Blessed One would fail to pass muster. Imitation was the sincerest form of flattery. The Supreme Buddha must have adherents from the royal fold. Birds of a feather flock together. The Buddha was no stranger to them. No human being is without relatives. Beginning with parents the family tree covers a host of relatives. The Buddha had paved the way for them. There was Bhaddiya son of Kaligodha the king himself. There, too, was Anuruddha the friend of the king. So Kimbila received ordination at a place called Anupiya. In accordance with their unanimous wish their barber Upali was ordained first. Kimbila was acting to the dictates of his own conscience. Arahantship was his destiny. Devadatta too, was there. A brother of Yasodhara who was destined for a great fall. Nevertheless he, too, was destined after he purged himself from the two deadly lapses to be a Pacceka Buddha. There was no expiation, or glossing over such heinous lapses. They were shedding the blood of Buddha by hurling a rock from the top of Gijjakuta hill with murderous motive on to the head of Buddha while Buddha was at the foot of the hill. But only The Buddha's toe was injured by a splinter and blood oozed from the body of the Blessed One. The other was the creation of a schism in the Noble Order. This is the deadliest of weighty (garuka) Kamma. The rest of the other three are in descending order (1) Killing one's mother, (2) Killing one's father (3) Killing of an Arahant. But the remaining five members including Upali signally distinguished themselves. Kimbila became a Maha Arahant of the Noble Order.

You have tasted all delight,
And have seen wonderful sights.
It was the Lord that made you wise;
You are set free from the vice.

47. BHAGU

A kinsman who stooped to conquer.

He was a Nobleman by birth. He was a Sakyan prince. He too was in that distinguished company of six Sakyan Princes with their barber Upali who sought ordination—vide life of Kimbila Sketch 46.

Once when he was plying the Bhikkhu life an incident occurred. He was meditating. It was peripatetic. That is to say wrapt in meditation, he was walking. There was a school in Greece that adopted this mode of meditation. Hence the derivation of the word. He became drowsy, slipped and fell. He took that falling as text for meditation (*Kammatthana*) and continued to meditate.

Human beings fall many a time. In one life alone many falls have occurred. Falling was due to weakness. This was a fruitful theme to the Bhikkhu. When Patachara Maha Theri was washing her feet she found that however much she used water each time the water goes further and gets absorbed in the soil. This supplied to her the theme of inevitability of *Death*. Again when Uppalavanna Maha Theri was in charge of the shrine room and was engaged in lighting lamps, the oil and the wick gave her much matter to ponder about Kammic force and memories of her former existence came crowding upon her. Such simple things provide a raft for meditation that took people across the ocean of Samsara.

Men fall many times,

But not think they are falling.

But monk fell once and falling

Fell no more for all times.

48. CUNDA

Preaching to the Master on sick bed.

He became in a short time an Arahant. He used to be a constant companion of the Blessed One. Once The Buddha fell ill close to a river called Kakuttha. He was near at hand. He improvised a bed and got a robe four folded to serve as a bed sheet. The Buddha's repose could be compared to lion's for the lion sleeps ready to get up in a crisis. Often we see the sculpters depicting the Buddha as such. (*Sīha Saṃyam*)

He slept sideways with his head resting on the right arm. The Buddha inquired from Venerable Cunda whether he knew and understood the seven factors of Enlightenment-viz. *Sambojjhanga* - This is a clear indication that the efficacy of the chanting of *Piṛith* depends on the bond of understanding between the reciter and the listener. It blesseth him that recites and him that hears. On the Venerable Cunda replying in the affirmative he was requested to recite the seven factors of enlightenment *Sambojjhanga*. They are summarily descided as follows:-

- (1) *Sati* or mindfulness
- (2) *Dhamma Vicaya* or investigating of Dhamma or Insight
- (3) *Viriya* or effort or energy
- (4) *Pīti* or joy or rapture.
- (5) *Passaddhi* or tranquility
- (6) *Samadhi* or concentration
- (7) *Upekha* or equanimity.

This is the special field of meditation or *bhavana*

The practice of these virtues bring about Enlightenment or the realisation of Nibbana. The Sutta has often been preached to the Arahants who were sick. Hence the Blessed One preached to Maha Mogallana and Maha Kassapa on the sick bed. It was a great privilege for Venerable Maha Cunda to be given the opportunity of reciting the Sutta to the Buddha.

There is a great lesson to be learnt. Even lesser beings if they understand the seven factors could derive much benefit when they fall sick if only they could procure the services of a monk or a layman who has a clear grasp of the meaning. Venerable Cunda was a master preaching to the Incomparable Master, the Buddha. The ideal he had pined for 100000 kalpas ago was realised at last.

When sickness got the upper hand,
While Cunda was at hand,
He preached to the Sage off hand,
The Seven factors to land.

49. NALAKA

A Monk who could climb the Himalayas of hermit life

This Maha Arahant was distinguished for the trying and difficult practice of Bhikkhu life called "Monaiya". It is called *Monaiya Patipada*. It is also called after his name - namely, *Nalaka Patipada* - vide Nalaka Sutta. He was born as a son to a sister of Asita also called Kaladewala. He was Purohita or Counsellor to King Sivaguru the father of King *Suddhodana*. After his father's death he was confirmed in the post by King *Suddhodana*. By that time he had become old.

Sakkiyans belong to a proud and haughty clan. Hence the king *Suddhodana* never bent his knee in salute to the aged minister but only with clasped hands. One day Asita asked the king's permission to lead a hermit's life. He was given permission to lead a hermit's life, but was enjoined to stay in the royal park and to partake the king's food. Not long afterwards Asita was an accomplished hermit.

One day Asita was in Tusita heaven named after the abode of 33 gods by means of psychic power through Jhana which was the out come of perfection of practice as a hermit. Now this heavenly abode was the jumping off ground so to say of all Buddhas to be. The last period of a Bosat's life was spent in

this celestial orb prior to being born on this earth. At the time of his visit, he observed much rejoicing among the deities. On inquiry, he learnt of the glad tidings that at last the Bosat has been reborn on this earth as a son to king Suddhodana and Maha Maya Devi his queen. Such a birth was always regarded as an auspicious event because not only this world but also other heavenly realms are going to be benefitted because a Buddha and Buddha only who could ably preach the precious Dhamma and set the wheel of the law as it were in motion.

To Asita this was welcome news, indeed. He came down to the royal palace at Kapilawatthu so familiar to him. The king regarded his presence as opportune. He thought his son would be blessed by his aged minister now a distinguished hermit. A ceremony was arranged. He duly prepared a seat for him and conducted in a fitting manner the royal babe to greet him. The moment the babe approached the hermit the auspicious feet struck the turban of the hermit to the amazement of the bystanders including the king himself. The hermit recovered his composure and saw the unmistakable sign of the wheel on the soles of the royal babe. The hermit knew that the child was going to be a Buddha. He sprang to his feet and to the consternation of all he worshipped the infant. On further examination he laughed in joy and wept in sorrow. The king inquired for this strange display of sunshine and tears. Then the hermit confessed that the end of his life's span on this earth has been reached and thereafter he would be born in the formless Brahma World and that too the highest where the life span is 84000 kalpas a period of time beyond human reckoning. By an irony of fate he could not wrest 35 years to hear the first sermon of the Buddha. Thus time is the essence not only of contract but also of arahatship. The relentless force of meditation must take effect, also, the life span on this earth is limited. He did the next best thing. He entreated his sister's son Nalaka to become a hermit in anticipation of ordination at the hands of the Blessed One. We are told that the aged hermit has amassed a vast fortune to the tune of 80000 crores. The nephew could not but obey so distinguished an uncle. He did so and this was the first instance of a person becoming a hermit in anticipation of becoming a bhikkhu in dispensation of a Buddha.

On the seventh day after the first sermon Nalaka proceeded to Issipatana near Benares where the Buddha was sojourning. He not only asked for ordination but indicated to the Buddha that Monaiya practice was his ideal. Buddha addressing Nalaka told him how difficult was the practice. The Buddha knew that for 100000 kalpas this young man during several births lived and had his being with this ideal in view. Only one Bhikkhu was destined to play this difficult role in the whole of the Dispensation.

After listening to the Buddha, Nalaka announced his three fold abstention viz:

1. to remain unshaken amidst a king's homage or people's abuse.
2. to remain calm in the midst of various sights and sounds encountered in a forest.
3. to get rid of all traces of greed.

It is crowned by his sojourning in one place for not more than one day. This was the most extreme form of abstinence possible for a bhikkhu. He was thus constantly on the move. Not for him was the satisfaction of listening to the Buddha. His ascetism was exacting. It was said that if one practised in a hard way, life, would not last for more than 7 months. If he relaxed a little he would live for 7 years. On further relaxation one could live for 14 years which is a record. Elder Nalaka practised in the rare degree and passed away on the seventh month. It was an inspiring example. The Moniya practice represents the quintessence of renunciation (*Nekkhamma*). It was the consummation of an ideal which he had aspired to under Padumuttara Buddha.

Buddha honoured him as a Maha Arahanat by getting his remains cremated and the relics enshrined in a dagoba.

The spirit has gone higher,
The loftiest star is no higher;
The ascetic's real model,
The hermit's true pinnacle.

50. SELUDAIYI

A learned Brahmin who followed the Buddha.

He was a citizen of Hansawathie in the Dispensation of Buddha Padumuttara at a time beyond human reckoning. He was attracted by the crowds paying homage to the Buddha. He followed suit and saw his counterpart in the company of the Blessed One. He forthwith resolved to be such an Arahant. Accordingly he gave alms. He was assured by the Blessed One that his wish would be fulfilled in this Dispensation. His life was on an even tenor. In this last life he was born in a wealthy and an influential family. He also became a learned man. He probed to the utmost depth of Vedic lore. Thus he became highly proficient. He was known as Seludaiyi.

When the Buddha was sending out missionaries of peace with the message -

"Go ye forth, Oh Bhikkhus preach the Dhamma glorious in the beginning, in its progress and in the end, for the welfare and happiness of men. Let not two go together",

to the various neighbouring countries and Buddha Himself was to tackle Kassapa at Uruwela who was intoxicated by the might of a huge following.

Seludaiyi proceeded to meet the Blessed One. It was insight at first sight when he heard the Law. With the background of learning he found little difficulty of becoming a Maha Arahant. He was ready for the call.

Hitching his waggon to star
Of Arahantship, travelling far.
Reaching utmost bounds of thought,
The Fruits of bliss he sought.

51. BHADDALI

A weakling that the Buddha converted.

Bhaddali learnt that the Buddha was supreme. His sermons lacked nothing in substance and form. The pupil got ordination from the Master. Since the assurance he received from the Buddha Padumuttara he enjoyed every conceivable comfort in every plane of mortal existence. In this last life the good kamma that he has sown in the past gathered momentum. In no long time, he was able with requisite effort to get rid of every stain.

One day at Jetavanarama, the Buddha promulgated the precept of not taking any solid food after the sun is past the meridian. This was the 6th precept of the Uposatha Sila. The Blessed One extolled the many benefits that one could derive by observing the precept. He said the body becomes light and buoyant. Furthermore the body becomes singularly free from disease. Even a lay man could observe it and reap its benefit specially on poya days, when Uposatha Sila is observed. To Bhaddali, however, this proved a hurdle. The Blessed One suggested a compromise by partaking a portion of the meal he received by going on rounds (*Pindapata*) But to Bhaddali the precept was too much. So Bhaddali crept into obscurity.

The Buddha was preparing to go on a tour after the 'Vas' season. "Vas" means staying in during the rainy season of 3 months. The bhikkhus were getting ready to offer a robe to the Blessed One. They had to get the cloth, wash and cut it. Then stitch and dye it. It involves much labour. All the while, Bhaddali was a keen spectator and his conscience was pricking him. He came out and joined the bhikkhus. He received a hint or two. He picked up sufficient courage to go before the Blessed One. He implored the Buddha to forgive him as he had committed an error. It was a confession. He saw the error of his ways. The Buddha readily forgave him. It was a climax. The Chapter of an infinitely long apprenticeship was closing.

He was regarded as a Maha Arahant of the Noble Order.

The Sage lays down the Law,
None could doubt its sanctity,
None is free from immunity,
Bhaddali saluted the Law.

52. AJITA

A leader among men pays his homage.

This Maha Arahant's past was similar to that of Venerable Mogharaja being subleader of 1000 followers each under their leader Bavari.

When the 16000 followers of Bavari proceeded to Jetawanarama, the Buddha deliberately left a footprint at the fragrant shrine (Ghandakuti) so called as it was the residence of the Buddha and left Jetavanarama. He did so for two reasons.

- (1) Jetavanarama was not spacious enough to accommodate so vast a gathering.
- (2) The procession was bound to attract attention of people.

They had to pass the following towns: Setavya, Kimbulvat, Kusinara, Pava, Bhoga, Visala before they could come to Rajagaha in a beautiful eminence. It was a successful propaganda drive as was willed by Buddha when He took up residence there. The place moreover, was sacred to the Hindus who had a devale at the site later was a vihare Hence the place was called Pahan Vihare. By the time 16000 contingent arrived, at a large crowd of people gathered from the areas and swelled the numbers and it was that skirted the gathering that found the Buddha whom they sought preaching. It is said that the throng of people on either side of the Buddha was six leagues long and in front twelve leagues long and all round about 36 leagues. It was indeed a memorable concourse of people.

As was instructed by Bavari the 32 manly attributes of the Buddha should serve as an introduction. Ajita scanned the Buddha and found to his relief the unmistakable signs. The identity was complete when the Buddha in anticipation of the three queries passing in his mind, told Ajita that their leader was 120 years old. He was the grandson of Pravara and hence called Pravari and popularly known as Bavari and three manly attributes that Bavari possessed;

- (a) the tongue was so long and broad that it can cover a good part of his face.
- (b) On the centre of his forehead that there was a single thread of hair white in colour curled up like a box spring.
- (c) his male organ was covered by a sheath of skin.

Incidentally these 3 attributes were out of the 32 mentioned by Bavari to his followers as belonging to the Buddha. Ajita and his 15 colleagues with 1000 followers of each were overjoyed to find the Buddha anticipating their questions down to the splitting of heads. Ajita fell prostrate at the feet of the Blessed One. As he did so, he said he was deputising for Bavari his leader.

The Buddha felt that a single sermon to so vast a crowd would not suffice. He saw the wisdom of approaching them directly within reasonable limits. This was what centuries later the Romans thought. "*Tot homines quot sententiae*" So many men so many minds. There were 16 groups headed by a leader of 1000 followers. He therefore allowed each leader to be the spokesman for his company for it is natural that men gather together by reason of some affinity. "Birds of a feather flock in a group" was the saying. Following the Socratic method He allowed each leader to put several questions. The Blessed One answered the questions and also the supplementary questions. Each group left after conversion. Ajita asked the Buddha-

- (1) What binds the worldlings?
- (2) What attracts them?
- (3) What brings about fear?

The Buddha replied that people are blind because of the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. That is to say those who are not concerned with unsatisfactoriness of life from the highest to the lowest and that people are born again and again due to craving and once the craving is got rid of by practising the eight factors or in other words by travelling on the Aryan Eightfold Path the goal of Buddhism is realised namely Nibbana.

It is greed that attracts the worldlings. For once desire is rooted out life ceases. Nibbana exists and because of its permanence, it is quite pleasant says the Buddha. Life be in the highest Brahma realms has an ending and hence sorrowful. In actual experience people have felt that higher their state the greater is the grief on quitting that state. The higher you are the greater the fall.

Fear is the result of unsatisfactoriness of life. People fear the birth of a child because of the perils of child birth. They fear for the same reason illness and old age which is another name for decay and lastly, death. Ajita was convinced. Ajita was one of the 80 Maha Arahants.

A born leader of good men,
He sought the Sage for light,
He was happy at the omen.
He shed the darkness of the night.

53. TISSA METTEYYA

By questioning one clears doubts.

He was called Tissa which was his personal name and Metteyya after his clan. As a follower of Bavari and a leader of 1000 strong he had the privilege of putting questions.

Who is happy in this world?
Who is not afflicted by craving?
Who has crossed over to the other shore?

The Buddha's reply is as follows:-

Who sees the shortcomings of craving and by mindfulness in respect of impermanency (*Anicca*) as well as understanding the Dhamma gets rid of desire and lust. Such a person has crossed over the ocean of Samsara. Or in other words he has stopped getting unsatisfactory rebirths by realising Nibbana. This is the gist of what the Buddha said.

The answers of the Buddha were a revelation to him. He had searched for the Four Noble Truths for a long time. He stood not only convinced but converted. Long preparation helped him to make smooth the Path. He and his followers became Arahants and Tissa Metteyya was numbered among the Maha Arahants.

The answers cleared the air,
Doubts vanished to thin air,
Aryan Path he entered,
Nibbana was secured.

54. PUNNAKA

What one has sown one must reap.

He was one with one thousand strong who met the Buddha at Pahan Vihare.

In the dim remote past. He was a hermit who practised Brahminic rites on the slopes of the Himalayas. It was at that time that a Paṇḍita Buddha by the name of Syabbhu was having the final release (Parinibbana). He made preparations and got the remains cremated. In this Dispensation he was born and named Punna.

He was anxious to know why people practise various methods to propitiate the gods such as kindling fires etc. The Buddha mentioned that it was because of craving. They are motivated in doing so to seek rebirth in Brahma heavens. There was no permanency. They have to quit one day and get a rebirth elsewhere and some times after being born as a human being gets rebirth in lower states. There are four such realms the lowest of which is called Niraya and the other three are called Apayas. Most terrible states of suffering are found in such abodes. The three Apayas are named in the following order - pretha, animal and asura the last being the most redeeming comparatively speaking.

In order to avoid all such hazards and vicissitude of fortune or misfortune one has to realise Nibbana the most difficult thing to achieve. One has to travel on the Aryan

Road comprising of three sections; virtue concentration and wisdom. Concentration is a prelude to meditation which is called in Pali as Bhavana, which literally means to cultivate. There are 40 such meditations each providing a separate Kammattana to the seeker after truth.

As a result of this discussion, Punna's doubts and no less those of his followers melted into thin air.

They became members of the Arya Sangha.

The doubts paralysed him,
A prey to every whim.
The Lord calmed his mind,
From passions of every kind.

55. METTAGU

Birds of a feather, flock in a group

HE was a follower of Bavari. He was a colleague of Mogha Raia and Ajita. Himself was a leader of 1000 followers. His life pattern was similar to that of his colleagues. It was so with all of us.

Again and again some people were re-born into the same circle. Death was no barrier. Mettagu was no exception. For instance the Buddha, Ananda, Sariputta, Mogallana to mention only a few have been born again and again in the same circle. Therefore, he was one of those who headed the vast concourse towards Pahan Vihare where the Buddha was found preaching. He directed a series of intelligent questions which brought answers from the Buddha, pregnant with meaning. The answers laid bare the hard core of the Dhamma like that of the hardy tree. At the same time he grasped the Doctrine as he listened to the words of the Buddha with wrapt attention. He became converted. He became one of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

Questions from the inmost heart,
Found wisdom of the highest art.
The stains were erased;
Doubts were cleared.

56. DHOTAKA

The Bridge he presented helped him to cross the Samsara.

The Buddha Padumuttara was in the habit of crossing a ferry very often with His followers. This happened in such a remote past that is beyond human reckoning. The period is mentioned as 100000 kalpas ago. Dhotaka built and presented a bridge to the Buddha in order to circumvent the delays and the discomforts inevitable in using a ferry boat. The Buddha was at that time residing in a monastery called Sobhita which was situated on a river bank. By this gift he aspired to be a Maha Arahant in the Dispensation of a future Buddha. He was a follower of Bavari in this dispensation and with thousand strong he stood before the Buddha Gotama at Pahan-sa. 'Sa' means a saya or dageba or vihara.

Dhotaka presented a series of questions to the Buddha regarding Nibbana and the road to Nibbana. The Buddha told him that there was no magic formula. It was necessary that the aspirant should be willing to tread the Path. There are beings who are confused and bewildered by various teachings of the various teachers. One must know the Truth and vigorously practise with mindfulness coupled with wisdom. Dhotaka was tormented by repeated sad rebirths. The Buddha told him that Nibbana was like the sky, it was unchangeable. Once you pluck out the thorn of desire that was within you, however difficult that may be, all would be well.

Dhotaka and his followers true to destiny saw clearly the Path and were converted. They became Arahants.

The ocean of suffering to bridge:

He gave the Sage a bridge.

No more the delays of the ford;

No more the perils to ford.

57. UPASIVA

Nothing could hinder an ardent mind from realising the Truth.

He was a follower of Bavari and a leader of 1000 strong. Ages ago he received his apprenticeship under Padumuttara the Buddha. It was because of the fulfilment of the Buddha's prophecy that he stood before Gautama Buddha along with other 15 leaders asking questions. His questions were to the point and the answers of the Buddha were as lucid as ever. At the time of His coming there were two main schools of thought prevailing upon which the Buddha laid emphasis in his first sermon. There were teachers who said that this life only that mattered. There was no rebirth and consequently no prebirth. "Let us eat drink and be merry" was their slogan. This was the doctrine of nihilism or Ucccheda Vada. The others said that the world was eternal. It was without end. This gave rise to eternalism Sassata Vada. The followers of the former enjoyed themselves to the brim. They gave full reign to their senses. While those of the latter inflicted upon themselves much pain and suffering in order to escape the eternal whirl of existence whether in the kama, rupa arupa worlds. The same idea Shakespeare echoed "Let us whip the offending Adam out of our Youth". Between these two extreme schools of thought the Buddha preached the Middle Way in His very first sermon.

Upasiva's inquiry was not only about the present existence but also about life beyond where body ceases to count and mind is the only thing that matters. It follows that the span of life in such circumstances would be necessarily long. There were four such worlds the highest of which viz. *Neva Sanna Nassañña* where the life span runs to astronomical figures and measured in Kalpas, that is to say the yard stick of measurement is of no avail. The Buddha made clear by His answers that true happiness cannot be had by living a life however long. The

termination of such a life must inevitably be unsatisfactory. *Nibbana* the goal of the Buddhism was the way out. There was no beginning or becoming and hence no ending or ceasing in *Nibbana*. Upasiva and his followers did not fail to grasp the significance of the Buddha's words. One and all became Arahants and Upasiva the greatest of them all.

He sought the life's riddle,
Why men have sadness to saddle.
The answers shed the light.
The mind was rid of the blight.

58. NANDAKA II

The answers laid bare the truth.

Nandaka sat at the feet of Padumuttara Buddha and aspired to be a Maha Arahant. The Buddha saw his future and saw the culmination of his career under the Dispensation of Gautama Buddha. Merit after merit ripened and in his last life he became a follower of Bavari. He was also a leader of men. So with 1000 of his followers he, too, had the privilege of partaking in the feast at Pahan Vihare. Each had his turn. Each had his problems to solve. Each had a Teacher fully competent. In fact there was no other teacher who was equal to the task. In the individuality is, thus, the key note of Buddhism.

The Buddha told him in answer to his questions that craving was the begetting vice of man. The Buddha saw at the foot of Bodhi tree soon after Enlightenment that the creator of man was none other than lust that has taken possession of the mind. He compared life to a house and that the builder was *Tanha* or craving. During life after life of sorrow He could not see the builder, like the other worldlings. He could not get away from the vortex of Samsara. He has utterly and ruthlessly destroyed the roof and even the main beam of the house has been split asunder. No more would *Thanha* the Carpenter build a house for him. For craving has for ever left Him. There was in every man four mighty urges. So strong was the pull of

each that it has been compared to a flood or Oga. Passions (*Raga*) come first Urge to live (*Bhava*) was the second. Wrong belief (*Ditthi*) was the third. Lastly the giant Ignorance (*Avijja*) Each of them lie latent in man (*Asava*). These are inter connected and inter linked. One cannot stand on its own.

These words worked like magic. Nandaka's doubts vanished. So were those of his followers. Leader and all soon joined the illustrious host at the beckoning of Buddha. Maha Arahantship was in store For Nandaka.

He aimed high and the highest.
Was the Law, he did his best.
The replies drew from him the best
To be counted among the blest.

59. HEMAKA

Reason rules his mind

Before coming here, he had the privilege of coming into contact from time to time with no less than three Buddhas of the past. Beginning with Buddha Padumuttara when he was inspired with the ideal of Arahantship and duly obtaining an assurance, he served his apprenticeship in turn, under Piyadassi Buddha and Vipassi Buddha. In those far off distant days he was fed up with earthly joys and was pursuing a hermit's life on the slopes of Himalayas. He was well versed in Brahminic lore. During the present Dispensation he had Bavari as his leader. He, too, was a leader of men. In that celebrated throng, he too, played his part. With 1000 strong, he was preparing to ask questions from Buddha Gautama. He elicited from the Blessed One that so long as the mind is not convinced of the real nature of existence, it is impossible to get rid of defilements. As a person who is short-sighted puts on glasses to remedy his vision, so he brings to bear mindfulness on the nature of one's body (*Kaya*) This process is called in Pali as *Kayanupassana*. In the Sati Patthana Sutta Buddha had emphasized four things which constitute man (*Loka*) Besides one's body (*Rupa*) there are feeling

(*Vedana*), thought, (*Citta*) and the real nature of Dhamma a comprehensive word covering a host of things relating to both mind and matter. The Sutta provides the complete answer or rendering of the 7th strand of the path viz. mindfulness. The traveller on the Aryan Path would be convinced of the fleeting nature of things including our bodies (*Anicca*) Such ideas of impermanency must necessarily give rise to feeling of unsatisfactoriness. (*Dukkha*). He would from then onwards easily grasp that the idea of a soul is but a mere fiction viz. (*Anatta*). Hemaka's mind was fit after such immense preparation for many ages to grasp the three characteristics (*Tilakkhana*) viz. *Anicca Dukkha* and *Anatta*.

He had also realised that Nibbana was the complete answer to the riddle of one's existence. There was only one road to reach that goal. It was the Aryan eightfold Path. In that moment, Hemaka and his followers had travelled that ancient Path.

It was not life that endures,
Nor earthly life that matters
But mightier far was lust's end,
Life's release and Heaven's end.

60. THODEYYA

A leader drinks deep at the fount of wisdom

Ages ago, as usual, he obtained an assurance from the Buddha Padumuttara. After that event ages later he was passing his time as a hermit under the shade of Himalayas on renouncing kingship. This was due to an interesting episode. A part of his territory revolted against his rule. He crushed the revolt ruthlessly as a warning to others. A whispering campaign soon grew up in denouncing him. It was his good fortune to meet the Buddha Sumedha. He donated Him with logs of sandal wood. He was rewarded by another assurance.

In this Dispensation, he joined that distinguished band of leaders under the command of Bavaai. So he stood with 1000 of his followers awaiting his turn for instruction from the Buddha Gautama.

If there is the slightest trace of evil, no mind can gain Deliverance. Thodeyya wished to probe into the origin of evil. He desired to know whether Nibbana could result on the cessation of desire. The Buddha replied that in the very wake of destruction of craving lies Nibbana. It was the third Aryan Great Truth. For the Buddha has defined Nibbana as the cessation of desire or craving. Its presence was the cause of existence. That was the Second Great Aryan Truth. Once Udayi thera asked the elder Sariputta how one could appreciate Nibbana when there was no feeling (*Vedana*). The Great thera replied that the very cessation of feeling was itself Nibbana. Wisdom alone pointed the way to Nibbana. The searcher after Truth sees the futility of desire (*Kama*) He sees the vanity of existence human or divine. A budding saint who is known as Sotapanno means by its very definition as one who has entered the stream that would eventually pour its waters into the great ocean of Arahantship. The evolution has begun. There is no turning back. At the most he would have six rebirths only. The goal of Arahantship was in store for him at this last rebirth. The answers of the Buddha went home. No more for him or his followers any doubts remaining. They all embraced Arahantship and the leader became a Maha Arahant of the Noble Order.

Doubly bold by nature
Nursed by gentle nurture.
Into the Path he entered
When the doubts were cleared.

61. KAPPA

A leader travels on the ancient Path.

His career so auspiciously begun under Padumuttara the Buddha flowered in this Dispensation under the Gautama Buddha. In accordance with the prophecy he received from the Buddha Padumuttara and as a stepping stone, he became a follower of Bavari. He too, had a following. When his turn came he, too, put his questions that were puzzling him. The answers of the Blessed one went home to him. 'Samsara' has been

defined as the continuous round of rebirths that was the lot of a worldling. It has been compared to an ocean in which a man finding himself in its midst must find extremely difficult to regain the shore. The Buddha had said that there was no hope for a man of escaping from this chain of rebirths so long craving (*tanha*) and ignorance (*Avijja*) are within him. The mighty Himalayas may one day be consumed in flames or the wide ocean becomes dry in the dim remote future, yet man may go on being reborn even when these things may come to pass. This is a fate of not only man but other beings as well. The Blessed One said inconceivable is the beginning of Samsara. This was what struck Kappa and his followers with dread. They were no less worried about decay (*Jara*) and death. This was the final lot of man. The Buddha had said "sorrowful are birth old age sickness death grieving lamenting bodily and mental pain and lingering traces of grievous shock, to be in the company of those whom we resent, separation from the loved ones, and to pine for what is not such as perennial youth. In short, this fivefold bundle of the grasping body feeling perception mind and thoughts good and bad was a prolific source of pain.

The Buddha showed the way to Kappa and his followers. It was the ancient Path that every Buddha pointed out to a suffering world from time to time. It is called the Aryan Eightfold Path. It is the Middle Way. It is marked by three stages. First the Virtue or (*Sila*). It is the foundation of any spiritual career however great. Samadhi or concentration arising from mindfulness occupies the centre. The summit is crowned by wisdom or (*Panna*). As opposed to wrong the first two links are right views and thought under (*Panna*) or wisdom. The next three are right speech conduct and livelihood under Virtue or (*Sila*). (*Samadhi*) or concentration takes in the last three. Kappa and his followers became Arahants.

None knew miseries better
Blest in spirit and letter.
He knew the end was meet.
The Sage was best in His beat.

62. JATU KANNI

Immense wealth was put to good use

HE was not lacking in wealth when he met Buddha Padumuttara. He invited the Blessed One to a sumptuous meal.

The greatest stumbling block to the spiritual progress of man is Kama desire. Man has six doors in giving vent to Kama Desire. The more he tries to feed the more the appetite becomes till the appetite become gargantuan; there is no satiety. The eye feeds on sight. The ear on sound. The nose on smell. The tongue on taste. The body on Phassa or contact. The mind on ideas. The people flit from one cinema to another, from one music hall to another, from one scent to another, from one hotel to another, from spring beds to inflated rubber mattresses, from one novel to another. It is a mad whirl. Science is harnessed. People try to make money by supplying the wants. Commerce enters the field. So everything becomes debased. 'getting and spending we lay waste our powers'.

Jatu Kanni with his followers under the command of Bavari put many questions to Buddha how to escape from this ever widening net. The *Incomparable Teacher* shows a way out. These men have sought the truth from age to age. The destiny was at hand. The long awaited hour has come.

One's mind said the Buddha becomes obsessed with the pleasures of the past as the cow chews the cud. Similarly one wishes to dwell upon in anticipation those of the future. Avoid both much less those of the present. The door to immortality becomes open to them. The road pointed by Buddha was the Appian Road. The Aryan Eightfold Path becomes clear. They have travelled far. They have reached the journey's end.

Their minds became transmuted like base metal to gold. He and his followers became Arahants and Jatu Kanni became a Maha Arahant of the Noble Order.

No door to him was shut,
No wall could keep him out;
Tangles within and without
With wisdom's sword he cut.

63. BHADRAVUDHA

He crossed the ocean of suffering.

A doughty leader of men, he had a 1000 followers. His master was Bavari. It was his destiny to stand at Pahan Vihare with his followers and to ask freely any questions he wished to ask from Gautama Buddha. And no wonder for he had obtained the assurance in the dim past from Padumuttara Buddha.

Preach to me oh lord, that glorious Dhamma which has already converted several of my colleagues and who have already left the scene. The Buddha replied that Tanha or craving must be got rid of. Just as the lotus flower springing from mud amidst water is detached from water and has not the slightest trace of mud, even so man born in this Kamaloka or world of sense desire must get rid of competely every form of craving. It is the determination that is the driving force. No journey could be made by simply wishing. Preparations must be made and you must set forth. The sense objects draw man to the ken of kama. What matters is how the mind reacts. An Arahant reaacts one way, worldling in a different way. His angle of vision is based on Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta. That is to say when he sees a human body he sees its component parts none of which is wholesome. He sees it as a decaying and perishing thing. And so with other sense objects. The worlding sees the human body in a different light. Desire said the Buddha leads to craving. A wiseman sees the futility of desire. A crocodile once it closes its mouth on the victim, will not disgorge until death. As one desire follows upon another, so desires multiply. Eventually man comes willy nilly into the iron grip like that of the crocodile, of craving.

If you give vent to lust
You will be o'er thrown by Mara
Prey to rebirth, you will be thrust
Into the sea of Samsara.

He and his men were soon converted. The leader became a Maha Arahant of the Noble Order.

The first steps are difficult,
It was not descent but ascent;
The lotus blooms from muddy lake,
He was free from greed and hate.

64. UDAYA

The vedic lore enriched by the Sage

From time immemorial, the practice of meditation has taken deep root in India. By reason of such practice, one is able to fly through the air like birds. Similarly, one could walk on water. To emit fire and smoke from one's body is another psychic deed. Another is to create material forms. To read another's thoughts is yet another. To recall past lives, to see far off places, or to hear distant sounds, are all feats flowing from such practice.

Just as the athlete achieves perfection by constant and arduous practice, even so the aspirant (yogavacara) has to practice very hard. Indeed, none could succeed, so long for the time being, there is a trace of passion or lust, ill will, lethargy restlessness or perplexity all five of which go by the name of *Pancha Nivarana* hindrances to the realisation of Jhanapower and much more to Nibbana. They constitute a complete bar to success. Each hindrance is sufficient. You have to meditate till your mind is attuned to one wholesome (kusala) thought immersed in morality or Sila. Such a mood is called Jhana or in Sanskrit Dhayana. It has five stages. First is the beginning or the initial application viz Vitakkha. The second is the sustained application or vicara. Naturally when the second is reached the first is eliminated. A good illustration is that if you ascend several stories of a building by means of ladders. There are 5 stories and 5 ladders. The latter represent vitakka, vicara, piti, suka and ekaggatha. Having reached the first floor by vitakka ladder which becomes redundant one ascends the second floor by vicara ladder which in turn becomes unnecessary when one reaches the third floor by piti or Zest (meaning joy) ladder which in turn becomes useless when one reaches the fourth floor by means of sukha or happy ladder which similarly gives way to Ekaggatha ladder. Ekaggatha or concentration of mind (samadhi) which is associated with equanimity (upeksha). Sutta nipata mentions all five Jhanas but Abhidamma pitaka gives four. In the case of developed minds the first and second Jhana go together which probably explains the difference. With the mind thus prepared the aspirant projects his mind into the Brahma or Rupa heavens.

Not satisfied the aspirant yearns for yet unexplored heavens where there is no physical body. These are Arupa heavens where exists only the mind. Such is the force of meditation. They are four in number and the periods of sojourn are proportionately tremendous. Extraneous aids are necessary to begin with. Patavi or earth kasina consists of a circle of 16" in diameter made up of fine or golden colour earth made into a paste with water and held up by a wooden frame and dried. Then there are 3 others called by the Pali names Apo Tejo and Vayo representing respectively water, fire and air. For their kasinas the mind is directed to such that are found in nature. There are 6 other kasinas. (Nila) or blue pita or yellow (Lohitha) or red (Odatha) or white which are all based on colours (Loka) or light akasa or space

Four Arupa heavens are open one by one as follows; The aspirant operates a gap in the above Kasinas and directs the mind on space and comes to the conclusion that space as it is now confirmed by noted astronomers, as unlimited. Then breaks loose from it to one's mind till one is convinced that mind is unlimited or 'ananto'. For there is nothing beyond the reach of one's mind. Then he rises therefrom and comes to the conclusion that there is nothing after all (*Nathi kinci*). Probing still further he comes to the highest when the mind is obsessed by the state that there is neither perception nor non perception. It is the finest immaterial state of the mind.

Udaya who had the distinction of obtaining the assurance from Padumuttara Buddha waited like his peers for his turn to ask questions from Gautama Buddha. He was a past master on psychic skill. All the more he became qualified to receive the Doctrine. The soil is made ready to receive the seeds of Wisdom that fell from the lips of Tathāgata. Udaya and his 1000 followers grasped the Four Aryan Truths. His was a gifted mind as set out above.

His mind was unflinching
Sharp sword needs no mending
An adept in meditation
His mind stood to attention.

65. POSALA

An Arahant quits suffering for ever.

A leader 1000 strong awaited his turn at Pahan Vihare. His own master was Bavari. It was the crowning moment of his life. What he had aspired to 100000 kalpas ago under Padumuttara Buddha has come close to fulfilment under Gautama Buddha. In accordance with the prophecy of a Buddha, his life has been kept going during innumerable rebirths fastened on his ideal. Sometimes forgotten sometimes remembered like a piece of cork that cannot for long be kept immersed by a weight in water but bob up no sooner the weight is removed even so Posala arrived at his destiny. The gist of his question was as follows: How could a person who has been born in the Arupa or Formless world that is the third stage referred to in the immediately preceding life Skekh 64 that is to say a person holding the view that there is no space or mind has wisdom? How is he reborn and how is his wisdom were to develop? It must be made clear in parenthesis that in the formless world the mind only and not the body functions. It is the mind with out matter. The reply of the Buddha is interesting. The rebirth of all beings occur except of course in the formless worlds in four ways (1) Andaja that is in the form of an egg like poultry (2) Jalabuja that is beings born in the womb like human beings et cetera (3) Sansejaja or beings born due to moisture like worms and (4) Opapathika that is to say like celestial beings or beings born in hell. Hence they are all born as adults full fledged. The Buddha by his divine or supernatural gift knows each class of beings born in the three categories of worlds namely Kāma that is to say the earth four woeful states and six heavens eleven in all Rupa sixteen and Arupa four altogether 31 in all. The universal rule of Anicca-namely that everything is subject to change Dukkha-that is to say that which changes is unsatisfactory Anatta-that which is liable to change and unsatisfactoriness namely, no permanent entity which is called a soul applies to the three worlds. The third Arupa world is no exception. One who is born there one day must vanish to be reborn again. This makes the being to realise the illusion of

permanency and in consequence grows wise. Till Nibbana is reached, beings flit from one place to another. The same idea is echoed by the well known writer and poet A. P. Herbert;

"In life's unending upward urge how rare it is to find
A terminus—an ultimate—Perfection in its kind"

The mind can flit into space;
Nothing can mar its pace;
The problems he knew by age;
He was rich by meeting Sage.

66. PINGIYA

He surmounts the limitations of age.

The first Aryan Truth enunciated by Sakyamuni 2500 years ago is that life is Dukkha. This Pali word has baffled translators. There is no English synonym. Whether you call it Pain, sorrow or unsatisfactoriness yet it fails to give it the right meaning. It lags behind its spirit. It eludes definition. There are many words in French and Greek languages which are untranslatable. One of the causes is extreme old age that leads to Dukkha. Nerchikott, the wizard of the Pasteur Institute of Paris had said that old age is a genuine disease. Pingiya was old. With the passage of 120 years he was the oldest of the old. Nevertheless, he stood before Gautama Buddha at Pahan Vihare a leader of 1000 men. He was the last to interrogate the Buddha. It was his lot to do so in fulfilment of the prophecy of Buddha Padumuttara. It was the old age that was the basis of his questions. Nibbana the third Aryan Truth was the cessation of Dukkha or suffering. He was face to face with Dukkha. The answers of the Buddha revealed to him that old age which was a prelude to death and which to Shaketpeare "is second childishness and were oblivion sans teeth sans eyes sans taste sans everything". He and his followers understood what life stands for. Questioning further they understood the second Aryan Truth namely the cause of Dukkha is craving. They understood, further, the way that leads to the cessation of Dukkha.

It was craving which is better expressed by the Pali word *Tanha* that make beings born again and again which action is generally referred to as "*Samsara*" The third stage of Arahantship namely *Anagami* is all that Pingiya was able to achieve despite old age. But Arahantship was his ere long. His followers found no difficulty in becoming Arahants.

The great task of the Buddha was over. Sixteen thousand followers and sixteen hermits their leaders who proceeded from the monastery of Bavari which stood on the bank of the river Godawari now trekked back to the self same place in an entirely different role. There were 16000 Arahants and 16 Maha Arahants all clad in the yellow robe each with the begging bowl which was theirs at the bidding of the Buddha "*Ehi Bikkhu*". The faith of Pingiya was similar to Wakkali's. That was the reason of his delayed Arahantship in addition to old age. Their lives were transformed in to "something rich and strange."

Bavari their leader looked from afar and saw the vision splendid. He concluded that the mission of his followerr was a complete success. He, too, was in the grip of old age. He was of the same age as Pingiya.

He inquired from them about their mission. They told him everything.

Pingiya sang the praises of the Lord. He proceeded to give a sermon to his master. The Buddha saw from afar what was happening. The Buddha created by psychic power an image of His likeness. He preached to Bavari the essence of His teaching. The portals of Arahatship were made open to him. But he could only reach the third stage of Arahatship namely the *Anagāmi*. In other words he has broken asunder the two great chains of greed (*Kama Tanha*) and Illwill (*Vyapada*) entirely. That is to say he has got rid of likes and dislikes. Besides, he has cast away the three other chains of Egoism Doubt and False Views. But he could bask in the success of his followers. Bavari will never be born again on any mortal plane of *Kama loka*. He would be reborn in the world of purity (*Suddhavasa*) There he would obtain the final release namely *Nibbana*.

The destiny age can mar.
Too much Faith is a bar;
But Pingiya surmounts all
To the Sage problems are small.

67. MEGHIYA

A house cannot be built on shifting sands.

He was the eighth attendant of the Blessed One. After him, the task was taken over by Ananda Thera, the Buddha's cousin who discharged the role with distinction. For twenty five years, in keeping with the Buddha Padumuttara's prophecy, he served the Buddha with singular devotion and energy. But Meghiya was cast in a different mould. He, too, hailed from the Sakkyan royal family.

Once the Buddha in the company of Meghiya was sojourning in a temple at Chalika mountain close to the town by its name. One day he obtained the permission of the Buddha to go to a village called Jantu for alms. Having partaken of the alms he proceeded by the river called Kimikalaka and came across what was to him a delightful mango grove. He fell in love with it at once. He returned to the Buddha. Begging the Buddha to go there, he was refused permission, as the Buddha was alone. Buddha knew that his mind was immature. So enthusiastic was Meghiya that he cared not that the Buddha was alone or that he should tarry a little till another monk comes by as requested by the Blessed One. He told the Blessed One that the Buddha had accomplished all tasks; that nought remained for Him to do. But in his case, it was totally different. For the third time, he asked permission, when the Buddha told him that when people are bent on practising holiness what is there to be said to the contrary. So he proceeded to the mango grove, the darling of his wishes. He sat down to meditate. He could not concentrate. It appears that he was a king at the very place in a previous life and by association, lustful ideas—Kama Vitharka—came crowding to his mind one after another as a result of ideas flowing from his one time harem. When he gave orders for execution of prisoners thoughts of hatred (viyapada Vitharka) and when he sentenced men to prison the thoughts of cruelty (vihimsa vitharka) gradually took hold of his mind. He was unequal to the task. He gave up the struggle. He came back whimpering to the Buddha who listened to his tale of woe. The Buddha remended him that what he did by impetuosity was to leave the Tathāgata alone. Then the Blessed

One revealed His genius by unfolding to him the nature of the mind. He preached to him the 33rd and 34th verses of the *Dhammapada* under the classification of *Citta*—the mind. By nature the mind is fickle and wavering. It is most difficult to guard or control. Just as a fletcher prepares the arrows with utmost care and attention— a difficult and arduous process connected with archery for an arrow well adjusted out of seasoned wood would strike if properly directed at the target with precision. Even so the mind has to be tended and cared for by an even more difficult process prescribed for each mind. By the second verse the Tathagata took us to the fishes. When the fish is taken out from the watery domain to the dry land, the fish writhes in death agony to get back turning from one side to the other. Even so the mind behaves. One brings the *Samsaric* existence to a close only by the deft application of the mind to the prescribed dual systems of meditation of *Samatha* and *Vipassana* laid down by the Buddha. The Blessed One not only diagnosed the disease of the mind but also prescribed the remedy. The foundation of psychology was well and truly laid over 2500 years ago. Then the Buddha preached to the Thera a sermon named after him.

“To an immature mind, Meghiya, the first requisite is to cultivate friendship with a good and ardent mind— a *Kalyana* friend”. Once when Ananda Thera hazarded the opinion that possession of a *Kalyana - mitta* is but half the practice of holiness, the Buddha said: “Do not say so, Ananda, for a *kalyana - mitta* is the whole of it”. There was the classic story of the Buddha Himself; how when He was known as Jothipala during the time of His Predecessor, namely, Buddha Kassapa, he had such a friend though of humble status he was a potter but withal the predecessor of Anatha Pindika — for he was the chief lay disciple of Buddha Kassapa. In the fitness of things Jothipala the Brahmin, had to obtain the last assurance *Niyatha Vivarana* from Buddha Kassapa that he would be the next Buddha Gauthama. When his friend suggested to Jothipala that it was time to visit Buddha Kassapa, the latter exclaimed, “Who would like to meet a shaven monk?” But Ghatikara for that was his name bided his time and when at the bath in the river he did an impious act. He caught hold of the Brahmin’s tuft

of hair and threatened to drown him. Only when the Brahmin promised to visit Buddha Kassapa, he refrained. The reverse is also true. Most of the readers are aware how Devadatta tempted the prince-Ajasattu - to kill his father King Bimbisara to succeed him. The Buddha had declared that in this very life Ajasattu would have entered the stream of saintship-Sotapanna- but for the heinous act- he was a patricide. It was one of the five great evils that knows no redemption. It has to be paid for. At the very next birth he has born in hell.

The second sine qua non is to lead a life of piety. Sacredness and sanctity are attached to the observance of precepts. You cannot have real Saddha or Faith unless you have confidence in the observance of the precepts promulgated by the Blessed One. Such observance is virtue or Sila. The road to saintship lies through virtue. The structure of holiness can only be built on the foundation of virtue.

The third is the listening to discourses on Dhamma. For knowledge of Dhamma is the third requisite to an immature mind. When the demon Alawaka asked the Buddha how to obtain wisdom, the Blessed One replied that in listening to discourses on dhamma one derives wisdom. With the advent of printing a person may gather knowledge by reading books; but it is necessary to have a teacher, so to say, to put him through his paces.

The fourth is the practice of Dhamma for practice makes perfection. Again and again the Buddha had stressed the need of practice in the holy life. Again in the Alawaka Sutta, the Buddha said that only the energetic could obtain deliverance from sorrow-, Nibbana. Meditation is nothing but practice of onepointedness of mind - concentration or Samadhi. Success would come only after repeated trying.

The fifth and the last need for an immature mind is penetration or obtaining Insight. This is possible only by cultivation of Vipassana- to know the why and wherefore of things. Impermanence is the key to the knowledge of non-soul. Over 2,500 years ago the Buddha made a solemn statement that all compounded things which include everything and everybody

are subject to change and, therefore, impermanent. Modern science could only reveal that statement as perfectly true. Anicca or impermanence is the key to the negation of a soul. Dukka or sorrow is but the necessary sequence. The all-seeing eye of an Arahant, by getting rid of the last fetter of ignorance or Avijja sees the world in its nakedness. He sees impermanence, sorrow and non-soul when he sees any object or being. Hence he is incapable of committing any evil through the three avenues open to man, mind, body or word.

Thus, Meghiya, if these five conditions are fulfilled he cannot overlook the fact that lustful feelings could be overcome by the mind dwelling on the thirty-two impurities of the body. Just as poison is tranquilised by an antidote this type of meditation is highly beneficial. One impurity is sufficient, only the thought must be intensive. A single lock of hair is enough. Similarly hate or malice could be got rid of by dwelling on metta or loving-kindness; so a discursive mind by concentrating on breathing out or breathing in, that is Anapānasati. Likewise by dwelling on impermanence or death one could get rid of the idea of a soul which is the root cause of egoism, the first hurdle that man has to clear in the race to Arahantship.

The gentle and wise words of the Blessed One had a soothing and calming effect on the troubled mind of Meghiya. For, no wonder, the aspiration that he made at the august feet of Buddha Padumuttara 100,000 kalpas ago—mighty stretch of time at which even imagination reels—is becoming at last fulfilled. Long is apprenticeship indeed. He became one of the eighty Maha Arahants of the Noble Order of the Blessed One.

The spirit's winged flight,
Left the mind in its light;
Kinsman who served the Sage;
Must tarry for fight to wage.

68. CHANNA

Blind attachment to the Buddha is a bar.

He offered to Buddha Padumuttara once upon a time, a mat woven by him. By such merit he became a king of kings (chakravartī rāja) as he also offered flowers culled by him to the Blessed One. He was born as such 7 times before he was born in this Dispensation. He was of the same age as Prince Siddārtha. In fact, he was one of the seven treasures of the prince being His charioteer. His mother was a servant maid of king Suddo-dhana. He was named Channa. He was the sole companion of the prince as he set forth (*Maha binikman*) sacrificing all that was dear and precious on that famous mission riding the charge Kanthaka so well known to the Buddhist world.

He was a devoted companion even after he was ordained. He was obsessed with the idea that none had a better claim than he to the Blessed One. This led to a serious pass. He had occasion to come into open conflict with the two Chief Disciples. Again and again the Buddha advised caution, but in vain. Attachment in whatever form the Buddha has declared leads to grief and fear. In Channa's eyes the Two Chief Disciples were usurpers. It was in vain that the Buddha stressed the value of friendship with the virtuous (*kalyana mitta*) or disaster that is in store of friendship with the wicked (*papa mitta*).

Channa did not mend his ways. When bhikkhus complained the Blessed One mentioned that Channa would only reform after His Pari Nirvana. That was the reason for venerable Ananda bringing to the notice of the Buddha at Kusinara on His final release that Channa had become a problem. The Buddha asked Ananda that they should boycott him in the modern parlance. Ostracism would answer the purpose. For Channa would then open his eyes. It is a version of *Brahma-danda* in Pali. He was accordingly cut off from society.

When Channa heard of it, he was much agitated and alarmed. The shock made him to turn a new leaf. In fulfilment of the prophecy of the Buddha Padumuttara, he set about to become a Maha Arahant.

Too much attachment to the Chief,
Ended in fear and grief.
The shock of passing of the Chief
Bade him to turn a new leaf.

69. UPAVANA

His faith made him to pay signal honour to the Buddha.

The story of his past life occurred after the passing away of Padumuttara Buddha. The occasion was the enshrining of the relics. A mighty dagoba was being built by beings human and devine. He was a poor man who had a shawl (uturu saluwa) as a part of his dress. He got this shawl thoroughly cleaned. He honoured the relics by planting the same as a banner on a long bamboo by the side of dagoba.

A demon chief called Abhisammataṅkaka got the shawl planted secretly on the top of the dagoba. When he saw what has happened, his joy knew no bounds. By reason of this merit, he never failed to have a following, wherever, he was born. He was always a leader. He was born many times as Sakka king of Gods or as a powerful king (chakravartī rāja). Thereafter he was born in this Dispensation in a Brahmin's family. He was named Upavāna.

He too became well versed in Vedic lore. He was an attendant of the Buddha before Venerable Ananda took upon the task. On the Blessed One falling ill, Upavāna went to a lay supporter or dayaka and extolled the virtues of the Blessed One. He procured from him warm water and suitable medicine and rendered medical aid to cure the Buddha. Thereafter, he plied the bhikkhu life so incessantly that in no long time he became an Arahant.

There was a notable incident in connection with the passing away of the Blessed One. While he was standing by the couch fanning, the Buddha requested him to leave. All present were struck by the remark. The elder Ananda who was as usual the spokesman inquired for the reason. The Buddha told Ananda how hundreds and thousands of the invisible world, powerful dewas and demons are hunting for every inch and often pin points of available space to have a last look at the Blessed One. It is no secret that unlike in the case of worldlings who were transparent to the gaze of dewas and others, Arahants were not. Venerable Upavana, had, therefore, to give way.

He was one of the 80 Arahants of the noble Order.

Past holds the future in the womb,
The kingship ends in gilded tomb,
None could fathom his treasure,
Except the Sage his measure.

70. BHADDAJI

Every Maha Arahant had a mighty past.

His past story had his recorded beginning in the Dispensation of Padumuttara Buddha. He was born in a Brahmin's family. He was not satisfied with Vedas. So he repaired to the forest. He saw the Blessed One in the air one day.

He worshipped Him. The Buddha had compassion on him and came down. He offered fruits to the Blessed One. Thereafter he was born in a treasurer's family in the Dispensation of Vipassi Buddha. He perfected in generosity (dana). He offered alms to 60,000 Bhikkhus. Thereafter, he was born as a King and had a son who became a Pacceka Buddha who predeceased him. He paid fitting homage to the relics. In this Dispensation he was born in the city of Bhaddiya in a treasurer's family. He was the only son. He enjoyed every conceivable worldly comfort. Gautama Buddha saw the young man's destiny. He came to Bhaddiya city. Large throngs of people were wending their way every day to hear the Tathagata. The young man joined the crowd.

One day he arrived at the temple clad in rich apparel. He listened to the sermon. The long prior training he had in countless generations prepared his mind. He was converted and became a full fledged Arahant. No Arahant could be a layman for more than a week unless he joined the Noble Order. Otherwise he must obtain Anupadisesu Nibbana by death. So Buddha told the father who was present what had happened. The father gladly acceded to his son joining the Order.

Buddha proceeded on to a village called Koti. In that place Bhaddaji was in a trance-Nirodha Samapatti lasting 7 days only to be interrupted if willed. This was the bliss of Nibbana that every Arahant living is capable of realising. So when monks came, they felt Venerable Bhaddaji was only an imposter. The Buddha soon found an opportunity to disillusion them. There was an alms giving in the place and when it was over, the Buddha crossed over a ferry, to pass on to the other side.

The Buddha came to the boat and inquired for the Thera. There were large crowds present, on the bank. The Buddha having got on the boat willed that Thera should enter the boat. Bhaddaji sprang to the air and fell at the feet of the Buddha in salutation. While the boat was in the middle of the river. The Buddha asked the Thera where the 20 storeyed palace stood when he was king Maha Panada. Thera mentioned that it was at the identical spot where the boat was. If it was so, the Buddha requested Bhaddaji to clear the doubts of the bystanders. So Thera using his psychic power brought the house to the surface and sprang to the air. Then the relations of the Thera in the former birth who were hiding in the house as fishes and turtles fell to the river. The Buddha addressing the Thera advised him not to weary his former relatives. So the Thera restored the house to its former position. King Panada was so called because he was truly great in all kingly qualities.

He was of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

Giving of alms is mighty
To the Triple Gem weighty
As a layman he was worthy
Of the Aryan majesty.

71. YASA

He had the unique distinction of having served Four of the Buddhas.

THE story of his past revealed the unique distinction of having served the four Buddhas during his candidature for Arahatsip. He began his career in the dispensation of Padumuttara Buddha when the idea dawned on him. He was a Naga king when Sumedha was the Buddha. He gave alms in abundance. He was a treasurer during the time when Siddhartha was the Buddha. He offered a replica of the Bo tree in gold.

In the time of Kasyapa Buddha, he ordained himself a Bhikkhu and led a Bhikkhu life. In this Dispensation he was named Yasa. There was nothing that he lacked by way of worldly comfort. There were minstrels and dancing girls that catered to his senses. The night looked like day so brilliantly lit was his residence.

One day, he went to sleep and arose much sooner than he did on other nights. He saw the hideous sight. It was the same sight that confronted Prince Siddhartha just before the fateful quest. The dancing girls were sleeping in all postures utterly nude. The musical instruments were scattered. The snoring there was of various sorts. The din was over-powering. He followed Prince Siddhartha's example. He quitted the home in the dead of night. He sought the Buddha who was ready to meet him. In well chosen words, the Buddha preached and Yasa listened. There was a bond of fellowship between the teacher and the pupil. The years of preparation were not in vain. Yasa became a Sotapanna. Yasa's mother early morning, found him missing. Father was informed. He lost no time in dispatching riders in all directions. He himself proceeded to Isipatana where the Buddha was residing. When he arrived the Buddha made Yasa invisible to his father. The words of the Buddha were reassuring. He told the father if he sat down he could see his son presently. The treasurer was amply rewarded. He was struck, by the sermon he heard from the Buddha. His doubts and perplexities were cleared. He was full of praise for the Buddha. He too, by reason of previous preparation in the past entered into the stream of saintship (Sota panna).

He was the first layman of this Dispensation to become a Sotapanna or a stream winner. The words that fell from the Buddha's lips went to sprout the seeds already sown in Yasa's mind. Yasa became an Arahant. At that moment the Buddha willed that the father would see Venerable Yasa. The father implored the son to console his mother who was pining for his loss. Then the Buddha asked the father whether it was suitable for Yasa to get back to layman's life. The answer was illuminating. For the father who went to the Buddha was not the same man. He had become a budding saint (sota panna). He said it was not suitable. Then the father invited the Buddha for an almsgiving so that venerable Yasa, too, could come. The invitation was welcome by the Buddha's silence.

In the meanwhile Yasa was ordained and was a Maha Arahant. At the almsgiving the Buddha preached to the mother and the former wives of Yasa. They were the first batch of lay people who embraced the Faith in this Dispensation.

Venerable Yasa was one of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

The services to the highest
Meet with the lasting reward.
His life offers the best record
Closest to Sakkyamuni the noblest.

72. LAKKHANA

Maha Mogallana's friend and companion.

He, too, took his rise during the Dispensation of Paduumuttara Buddha. Since that time he had heaped much merit and finally he was born here a Brahmin by the name of Lakkhana. His circle was Uruwela Kasyapa and his two brothers Gaya and Nadi. With their conversion he, too, became an Arahant. He was a friend and companion to Maha Moggallāna. In the course of their travels, they came across a non-human spirit on the top of Vulture's peak (Gijjakuta) who is in one of the four states of woe. viz Pretha

The others are hell, animal and asura states. He had the shape of a crow and was emitting flames. On being questioned about the reason for his suffering he said that once upon a

time he was born as a bird in the family of the robin. This bird during the Dispensation of Kassapa Buddha while people were offering alms to bhikkhus suddenly flew in that direction and snatched three mouthfuls of rice and flew away. It was the result of that action.

On another occasion, on the same spot, while the same pair was going, Maha Mogallāna only saw a serpent with its immense length enveloped in flames, with a human face and a mouth like that of a pig. Maha Moggallana then smiled but put off answering the reason of the smile till they met the Buddha, Venerable Lakkhana waited for the opportunity and then asked. The elder Mogallāna explained that while sympathising with suffering of that being, yet it was with a sigh of relief that he smiled, because no longer for him such states of suffering possible. The Buddha concurred, and said that He, too, after Enlightenment at Gaya, saw the same serpent but did not wish to tell as there would be sceptics. What a Thathagata discloses it would be by a lapse not to believe. Besides, a Buddha's utterance is well timed. This applies to scientific developments of which the Buddha was silent. It does not therefore, necessarily follow that the Buddha did not know them. Besides, they form no part of His mission. Here is testimony corroborated by the Buddha Himself. Lakkhana was one of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

Friend of Moggallana,
Follower of Kassapa,
He saw the states of suffering;
Why the pain they are undergoing.

73. GAVAM PATI

Service to the Buddha brings ample reward.

He, too, was known from the time of Padumuttara Buddha when his ideas became clear as to Arahantship, as soon as he saw an Arahant. Thereafter, he amassed a lot of merit till he was born in the Dispensation of Konāgama Buddha. He was specially mentioned as having paid homage to the Buddha relics.

Thereafter, he was a shepherd in the Dispensation of Kassapa Buddha. There too he was fortunate in having a

shelter made for the Buddha. By that merit, not only he was born in heaven but had a flower garden called *Sirissaka* named after the trees (*Accacia*) used for shelter. Thereafter, he was born as the fourth friend of Yasa the treasurer's son who sought ordination. The other three were Wimala, Subahu and Punjabi. He followed Yasa and became an Arahant himself. One day he was in Sakata Town where was a forest near by called Arijana whither the Buddha and an immense host of bikkhus came,. As there was hardly any room available for all, some made use of the sandy bank of the river Sarabhu. In the dead of night as a result of a storm, there was deafening crash of waves on the bank and some of the young monks who had not made much spiritual headway, were agitated and cried out. The Buddha espied venerable Gavampati on whom He relied to still the storm and to permit them to use another place by his psychic power. He did so accordingly.

There is a beautiful story as a result of Gavampati resorting to Serissaka which was a heaven where he lived formerly to enjoy the bliss of Nibbana, new and then. It is called Nirodha Samapatti and lasts not more than seven days. While there he met a person called Payasi who was a subking living on this earth. He had a friend by the name Uttara. Payasi scoffed at his friend who full of Faith was exceedingly generous. He was passive but never an active supporter in the giving of alms. Payasi was born an insignificant deity in the deserted flower garden called *Sirissaka*, while Uttara was born as a powerful deity in the heavenly realm called *Tavatimsa*. Payasi implored Venerable Gavampati to inform mortals the ignoble results of giving without faith (*Saddha*). Even today there are men who do not actively participate in the giving (*dhana*) by their spouses.

While living on this earth he asked questions from the Elder Kumara Kasyapa vide Life No 28 on Kamma and Rebirth and the brilliant exposition by the Thera in Payasi Sutta.

The Elder Gavampati was one of the 80 Maha Arahants.

Services rendered to the Great
Bring reward in ample measure;
Yasa's friendship lent him weight
To reach the Aryan Treasure.

74. PUNNAJI

Healthy association brings its own reward

He was one of the four friends of Yasa the treasurer's son to join the Noble Order. He himself was the son of a treasurer at Benares. He, too, made the resolution to be an Arahant in the Dispensation of a Buddha and he begged of Buddha Padumuttara for this boon. The Buddha assented. Yasa's noble example of seeking ordination, he followed. In no long time he became an Arahant.

Venerable Punnaji was one of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

Friendship is truly fragrant
With the heroic and Great.
An example lent weight,
Never more to be a vagrant.

75. NADI KASSAPA

He carved a career for himself

He was the younger brother of Ūruvela Kassapa whose conversion invited the labours of the Buddha. Ūruvela Kassapa was a leader of 500 followers and his brother Nadi was a leader of 300 followers. The reason why the Buddha took upon himself the role of a missionary to this district was because of the enormity of the task. For each was a leader of men.

One day, Nadi Kassapa observed turbans and other paraphernalia of the hermits flowing down, from the direction of his brother's abode, the Neranjara river by the banks of which he, too, was living. As they wore turbans they were called Jatilayas. He, therefore, went with his 300 followers to ascertain the cause only to find that his brother not only had become a convert to Buddhism but also his 500 followers had followed suit.

The Buddha preached to him the sermon called Adittha Pariyaya Sutta. He was glad that the Buddha came to Uruvela as otherwise they would have been on the wrong track; steeped in ignorance and would have had endless re-births with unpredictable results in consequence. As men were tossed about in the ocean of Samsara due to stupidity and greed, so would they be.

Tending to the fires of the hearth and cloister would be to travel in a blind alley. It was greed to obtain rebirth in heaven. Due to the Buddha he won emancipation. So the resolution that he made in the time of Padumuttara Buddha had borne fruit, after the lapse of so many years.

Venerable Nadi Kassapa was one of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

Gently, gently brother mine
Be to me a gold mine.
Arrival of the Sage was like rain
Ample harvest was in its train.

76. ANGULIMĀLA

From grievous fall the Buddha rescued him

This was a man of extremes. His is a unique record. A bandit who has made good. His career offered a contrast. Born to a counsellor called Baggawa to the king of Kosala, he was named "Hin Saka", so called because the weapons shone throughout the country in the hour of his birth.

The king of Kosala had a sleepless night when he observed the phenomenon of the shining of weapons in his armoury.

His fears were allayed when the counsellor called on him in the following morning. He was well versed in the science of astrology. He told the king that it was due to the birth of his son who was born last night and was going to be a bandit. The king was alarmed. To find out the king's disposition he offered

to kill the child. Then the king asked whether the child was going to be a bandit chief or a single bandit. He replied that he would be the latter. The fears of the King were allayed as he felt that his kingdom would not be harmed by a lone bandit. According to custom the child was sent to the university of Taxila where he had a distinguished career. His name was converted to "Ahimsaka" harming none partly because he hailed from a family whose shield was untarnished by crime, and partly because of the child's character. He excelled in study and in sports. Soon he incurred the jealousy and hostility of his colleagues who plotted against him. But he was very strong due to his ministrations in a former birth to a Pacceka Buddha. His enemies could not prevail against him. He was a favourite of the Vice Chancellor of the University. Soon he incurred his hostility due to the whispering campaign of his enemies. They spoke of his illicit love to his wife. But he, too, being a clever and learned man, bided his time to compass his death.

When the leave taking took place, he asked for the usual tribute due from a student to a teacher in the shape of an extra ordinary request. He asked for 1000 right thumbs of human-beings. Ahimsaka was taken aback and promptly refused so sanguinary a request. But the chancellor was adamant. In the event of refusal a curse would be on him. Again and again he pleaded in vain for another tribute. There was no escape from the rigid ancient custom as this tribute was in lieu of past tuition fees. So Ahimsaka demurred - consented in order to preserve the learning, for a refusal would act as a blight. Having armed himself, he repaired to the forest called Jalita in the Kosala kingdom. He killed all and sundry who ventured into his domain. But the thumbs could not be preserved. Either the wild animals ate them, or they became rotten. He therefore got a garland made and was wearing it. Hence he was called "Anguli Māla" He had 999 thumbs and was anxious to secure one more to close this bloody chapter. His teacher thought Anguli Māla would never survive the campaign. He would assuredly be slain in the process, or taken captive by the King.

It was a fateful morning. The king, on receiving complaints from the people was setting out to capture the bandit, dead or alive. His mother Mantani was anxious about the fate of her

son. She implored her husband to warn the son of the impending danger. But he would have none of it. So the mother's love urged her to plunge into the forest, alone crying out that the son must pay heed to the family tradition by giving up killing and that the king's army was on the march to capture him. It was very likely that the bandit might not spare his own mother, for he was desperate. The all compassionate Buddha saw his impending doom. He knew that he was destined to be an Arahant in this very life. He saw the possibilities of redemption. So He planted Himself despite warning by the passers by between the robber and his mother. Here the robber saw that the perfect thumb of the Blessed One would be a fitting finale to the series of bloody thumbs. So Anguli Māla hurried towards the Blessed One as was his custom with his sword up lifted. The Buddha was going at a measured pace, but with all his speed Anguli Māla was not able to catch up the Blessed One. This was willed by the Blessed One. It was a psychic feat of the Buddha. Anguli Māla has come to the end of the tether by running so fast and so long. In utter desperation with beads of perspiration oozing from his body he shouted out to the Blessed One to stop—*Tittha Samana*. But the Blessed One said that he had stopped. He, too, must also stop. Anguli Māla had a meritorious past. From the Dispensation of Padumuttara Buddha when he aspired to be a Arahant, he had performed many a good deed. The word "Stop" galvanised him. To a potential Arahant it has a wealth of meaning. It was closely related to Samsara—this ceaseless round of births and deaths He asked the meaning of the word which he had temporarily lost sight of. When he was running Tathagata must have moved, so thought Anguli Māla. Could it be that the Buddha was guilty of a falsehood. So Anguli Māla requested the Buddha to unfold the meaning of stopping. This was the opening the Buddha sought and the Tathagata preached with precision and unerring skill. Anguli Māla flung the garland and weapons aside. He begged for ordination. At the end of the sermon he became an Arahant by the application of 'Ehi Bhikku' formula of the Buddha. With Angulimāla the Arahant the Buddha went back to the temple.

It was the custom of the king to visit the Buddha on the eve of a hazardous campaign. The Buddha inquired the cause of the armed expedition. The King explained. The Buddha told

the king that Anguli Mala was in the temple. Hearing the very name mentioned the King was trembling in fear. His Army Chief fled and so the soldiers hither and thither in confusion. So fearsome was the report of Anguli Māla, The Buddha hastened to explain that Anguli Māla in the temple was a far different being from the bloody bandit he was; Anguli Māla would not now even harm an ant. Though an Arahant, the name stuck. Changes to the names seldom or never occur in those days. Nick Names specially are brimful of meaning and depict character hence seldom or never were they changed. Unlike now when names are changed with impunity regardless of rhyme or reason.

Anguli Māla was introduced to the King who offered his precious shawl to him. But Venerable Anguli Māla was an adept in the practice of austerities. He declined as it was no longer of any use to him. The king invited him to the palace for alms. The king was struck by the radical transformation of the recruit.

The bandit whom he came to capture has become an Arahant by the might of the Buddha. But Venerable Anguli Māla was not entirely immune from his bloody past. Whether a stone aimed at a crow or whether at play among the children Anguli Māla on his round for alms invariably became the target of the missile. Often he arrived at the temple with bleeding wounds, as a soldier would return after a battle. So inexorable was Kamma that it hastens to operate in his last life as it did with Venerable Maha Moggallana. For the rest and residue of Kamma would be a spent force on his final release (Nibbana) - *ahosi Kamma*.

One day on his rounds, Venerable Anguli Māla heard the birth pangs of an expectant mother in labour. Other Maha Arahants must have heard the cries. But none of them was moved to the extent of Venerable Anguli Māla. He approached the Buddha and confessed his concern at such suffering and begged the Buddha to allay the anguish. The Buddha asked him to meditate upon the power of Truth:- In-as-much as Anguli Māla was entirely devoid, since birth of cruelty, so by virtue of that truth, the suffering may be assuaged. Such was the blessing he was asked to give. It was a short sermon called *Anguli Mala Sutta*.

Venerable Anguli Māla could not believe his ears, but the Buddha told him that the birth referred to was his arrival at the goal of saint-ship (Ariyabhumiya). By this means he was not only able to bring much needed relief but also to mitigate his own suffering. For he was able to survive his past notoriety. Wherever he went for alms people shunned him. Others left him. Often he returned to the temple with an empty or nearly empty bowl. His kind act was noised abroad. His grim past was offset by his glorious present. When the monks were discussing the feat of the Buddha, He preached the Suthosoma Jataka. It illustrates how Suthosoma the king kept his word long before Livingstone did to return and meet the demon who had captured the king and who consented to his going away to hear a sermon. He returned. He kept his promise. He converted the demon by preaching. King Suthosoma was the Blessed one and the demon was Anguli Mala. Even today Anguli Mala Sutta is recited by bhikkhus.

Venerable Anguli Māla was one of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

To render a bloody tribute
For past lessons to commute;
The Sage rescued him from toils
Of the teacher's bloody coils.

77. GAYA KASYAPA

He followed the brother's example

THE youngest of the three brothers. The eldest was Uruwela and the other was Nadi—each with a following of 500 and 300. Gaya Kassapa had a following of 200. He was practising the foolish method then and even now prevalent among the Hindus that by tending fires and bathing by immersion three times a day in the Ganges River that you could atone much less cleanse bad kamma. So one day what his brother Nadi found, he also saw—the turbans flowing as he, too, lived down the river. He wished to investigate the cause. Was it a sign of dire calamity? So he travelled up-stream to

find his elder two brothers with their 800 followers have become Bhikkhus and were under the leadership of the Buddha. A remarkable achievement of the Blessed One.

They had become Arahants

The urge in him that took root during Padumuttara Buddha- to become an Arahant himself, now asserted, He and his 200 followers followed the example. They sought ordination. Just as a fertile field was made ready to welcome the seeds even so their minds were fully prepared to listen and grasp the Dhamma. The seeds fell on good ground. They in no long time became Arahants.

Venerable Gaya Kasyapa was one of the 80 Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

The elder brother's conversion spoilt
The house of cards they have built.
Heaven cannot hold sway
When sure bliss was under way.

78. ACELA KASYAPA

Inquiry is the gateway to the realisation of Truth.

He wore no clothes. Hence the name of Acela. He belonged to the clan of Kassapa. He was, therefore, called Acela Kassapa.

One day he met Gautama Buddha going out from Veluvanarama in Rajagaha for alms. He wished the Buddha to answer a question, The Buddha pointed out that it was not the occasion. When he pleaded that he had not much to ask, the Blessed One consented.

He asked whether what one or another did was conducive to happiness. The Buddha's answer was in the negative. Then he put a supplementary question whether what one or another omitted to do was conducive to unhappiness. The Buddha said there was unhappiness.

The Blessed One knew that there were two schools of thought. One section maintained that there was no rebirth. (*ucchedavade*). The other section held that the world was eternal (*Saswatavade*)

Buddha's eightfold Path was the *Middle Way* lying midway between these opposing schools of thought. It was *via media* also *via sacra* of the Romans.

The Blessed One unfolded the law of dependent origination. In Pali it is called *Paticca Samuppada*. Which is the law of causality expounded in the formula of twelve Nidanas namely "From the cause of ignorance (*Avijja*) spring activities good or bad (*Sankhara*). This is past Kamma. From activities arise consciousness (*Vinnana*) that is rebirth of relinking consciousness from which arise mind (*nama*) denoting sensation and perception and body (*rupa*) *rupa* - meaning body or in other words *Nama Rupa*. The six sense organs including mind (*salayatana*) are inherent in a being and therefore arise. From which comes contact (*Phassa*) From contact feeling (*Vedana*). From *Vedana* or feeling arises desire (*Tanha*). From desire results grasping (*upadana*) From grasping becoming or Kamma of the future (*Bhava*) from which arises birth (*Jati*) from which flow as the night follows the day the medley of miseries or pain etc. to which man is heir to; all such suffering is meant by the First Truth.

Step by step the Blessed One showed how stupidity and greed led one ultimately to rebirth. The cessation of rebirth is Nibbana the *Third Truth the state where no trace of Tanha exists*. Acela Kasyapa had travelled far in the quest of Truth. From the time of Padumuttara Buddha he had the lode star of Arahantship dangling before him. He was a close friend and pupil of Bakkula Thera (vide Sketch 33) who inspired him. Acela Kasyapa was one of the 80 Maha Arahants.

Great Spirit, thou wish to clear,
A point that thou held dear.
The origin of pain and its end,
He saw as he was on the mend.

79. SABHIYA

An heroic past culminates.

He was one of the 7 heroes vide life of Kumara Kassapa (28) Sabhiya was the last but by no means the least. He was the offspring of a love match. His mother who was given in charge of a tutor eloped with a servant of the tutor. Sabhiya was born in a hall where the parents were sojourning on being driven out by the angry parents. Hence his name.

He became a hermit and distinguished himself as a powerful speaker. He was also a skilful debater. Finally vanquishing all, he settled down as a teacher. He was blissfully ignorant of the presence of Gautama Buddha. While he was living thus, his erstwhile colleague the 'anagami' saint saw his plight and forthwith came to his rescue. His presence was reassuring; he gave him a question and requested him to follow the teacher who could give a correct answer. So Sabhiya went from one teacher to another. The reception he got was either cold or lukewarm. They did not welcome people trying to find out how clever they were. They cover up their shortcomings by being offensive. They believed that attack was the best form of defence. There were at the time six such teachers and each had about 500 followers (1) Purana Kasyapa (2) Makkali Gosala (3) Ajita Kesa Kambala (4) Pakudha Kaccnyana (5) Sanjaya Bellatthi Putta (6) Nighantha Natha Putta. One and all cold-shouldered Sabhiya.

Sabhiya on each occasion had to return disappointed. Finally he went to the Blessed One. Success came to him at last. It was a welcome contrast. The Buddha not only welcomed him but readily answered the question. Tathagata was no teacher with a closed fist that is to say a teacher who kept back something from the pupil. On the contrary those who did were suffering from *Gurumusti*. It was a fourfold question that was put to the Blessed One.

- (1) Who is a Bhikkhu ?
- (2) Who has succeeded ?
- (3) Who has conquered ?
- (4) Who is a Buddha.

The Buddha answered by 4 verses.

The Buddha told Sabhiya that a Bhikkhu must pursue the Noble Middle Way. It is the broadest and most direct route to Nibbana. Avoiding extremes and keeping the mind pure he gets rid of doubts. It is a road that is likened to a rope of 8 strands known as the Noble Eightfold Path.

Further the Buddha told Sabhiya that to be successful one must not be drawn by an agreeable sight nor repelled by a disagreeable sight. He is humane and has no trace of anger and above all compassionate. He is unshaken by desire. He is pure in word, thought and deed. Hence he is free from defilements. Addressing further the Buddha said that a conqueror is one whose vision is clear. He sees the world as nothing permanent. It is ever changing however imperceptible. Kamma the greatest force ever known is responsible for the rebirth of beings and that no separate entity called a soul goes out upon death. As the poet Meredith so beautifully said

“On the ancient track, marched rank upon rank,
The army of the unalterable Law”.

Hence he is not a prey to desire. Death has no terrors for him. Lastly Sabhiya was introduced to the Buddha Himself, Supreme in knowledge, sees the intrinsic worth of man. He sees further than any the past of man. To the all knowing Tathāgata nothing is hidden. He was the pioneer to discover the Truths. He blazed a trail to Nibbana “the sumum bonum” of man’s happiness that truly lasts when everything is fleeting. Sabhiya was rewarded for his pains. He became enlightened and no wonder. For he had prepared himself for this lot since Padumuttara Buddha. He knew the difference between a real and a pseudo teacher. He fell at the feet of the Buddha and requested ordination. He became an Arahant. He was one of the 80 Arahants of the Noble Order

A noble son of the Order
In debate and learning perfect;
The answer complete in order.
Was Aryan food to intellect.

80. SAKULUDAYI

A leader of men whose Arahatship was delayed.

Once as a hermit he was sojourning at a place called Mora Nivasa at Rajagaha. He had a large following. They used to discuss about men and matters. One day they were talking loudly over the respective merits of the various leaders of the day. The Buddha who was at Veluvanarama specially built by king Bimbisara arrived on the scene. Sakuludayi not only silenced his men but also prepared a seat for the Blessed One. The Buddha inquired as to the topic of discussion. They said that the Buddha provided a contrast to the others notably Purana Kasyapa, Makkali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambili, Pakkuda Kachchayana, Sanjaya Bellattaputta and Nigantha Natha Putta. On further questioning they said that the Buddha was noted for frugality and contentment. But the Buddha observed that it was not so always. Sometimes His own followers as a rule stick to certain rules but the Buddha had to act according to certain circumstances. For instance, he resides at Jetawanarama a sumptuous abode whereas some of His followers were forest dwellers. Sometimes the Buddha visits the palaces for alms, whereas some followers go on rounds for food (pindapatha) from house to house. The Buddha sometimes went about with an immense concourse of Bhikkhus. Sakuludayi has travelled far in the pursuit of Truth.

He was regarded as the eightieth Maha Arahant. Yet it was a misnomer, He was born afterwards in the time of Emperor Asoka as Assagutta Maha thera. This extension of time was attributed to advising a certain bhikkhu in a former life to leave the order in order to secure his robes. This was regarded as a lapse. It was due to Tanha.

Metta or all embracing love to all beings was his throughout his career from age to age. It is the first Brahma Vihare. The three others are *Karuna*, *Mudita* and *Upekha*. Brahma means the highest even as Maha Brahma has all the four qualities to the brim. If practised thoroughly it would mean a shield of highest protection against all harm.

His love was all embracing;

He had a large following.

From sorrow he did not cease,

Another life saw life's release.

1. MAHA PAJAPATI GOTAMI

There is no word so sacred as "mother"

She was Buddha's foster mother as well as his maternal aunt. The King Suddōdhana married both sisters Maya and younger sister Gotami. When queen Maha Maya died on the 7th day of the birth of Prince Siddattha her younger sister from that day became the queen and foster mother of the prince.

She felt miserably lonely when Prince Siddhattha, Rahula his son and her own son Nanda renounced the worldly life for the higher life by entering the Noble Order. King Suddhodana also passed away on attaining Arahathship. Ordination was dangling before her eyes.

She approached the Buddha on His visit to Kapilavastu and asked for the boon of forming the Order of the Nuns. But thrice Buddha turned down the request. She was dejected. She went back. Soon 500 maidens gathered round her. They too, felt the urge either through bereavement or their beloved kith and kin for seeking ordination.

So she determined to make amends. She shaved her hair and donned the yellow robe. Her 500 followers followed her example. Kapilavastu was separated from Jetavanarama by a distance of 357 miles. She covered the distance with her followers by foot although various chieftains and lords placed their chariots at their disposal. The dusty roads in those days were quite unlike the roads of the present day. There were no pavements. The gentle feet of Maha Pajapati Gotami were unused to such rough use. At the end of the journey they were thoroughly exhausted and travel-worn. They were footsore. The march made a great stir in the district through which they passed. Such a walk attracted attention and soon the crowds lined the route. She felt that in the circumstances it was not fitting that she should court a refusal by the Buddha. So she and her 500 companions lingered at the entrance of Jetavanarama when to their great good fortune, Venerable Ananda appeared. He was amazed to see his aunt in such a sorry state. He inquired whether any calamity had befallen the royal house of

Sakyans or whether there was a revolt. She assured him there was nothing of the kind but told him the purport of her mission. Ven. Ananda was eminently fit to play the role of a mediator. Again and again Ven. Ananda entreated the Lord only to be refused.

Finally Ven. Ananda inquired whether it was not possible for a woman to attain the bliss of sainthood. Then Buddha having seen with His divine eye the past consented to the establishment of the Order for Nuns but only on 8 conditions.

Maha Pajapati Gotami has since Padumuttara Buddha from whom she obtained the assurance on seeing her like, had done a signal service to 5 Pacceka Buddhas while being a leader of 500 servant maids. Between that Dispensation and that of Kassapa Buddha, she was responsible with the help of the servant maids and their husbands to build a house to shelter a Pacceka Buddha. These were the 8 conditions:—

1. A Bhikkuni even if she was in the Order for 100 years must respect a Bhikkhu even of a day's standing.
2. A Bhikkhuni should reside within 6 hours of travelling distance to and from the temple where Bhikkhus reside for advice.
3. On poya days a Bhikkhuni should consult the Bhikkhus.
4. A Bhikkhuni should give over the "vas" to the orders of both Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis.
5. A Bhikkhuni should ply her life by both the orders.
6. A Bhikkhuni should on 2 years obtain the higher ordination (Upasampatha) by both Orders.
7. A Bhikkhuni cannot scold a Bhikkhu.
8. A Bhikkhuni cannot advise a Bhikkhu rather it should be the other way about.

When Venerable Ananda broached the news to Maha Pajapati Gotami she was glad. She wholeheartedly accepted the conditions laid down by the Buddha. She was true to her destiny. She became not long afterwards an Arahant. So

ilkwise did her companions on listening to the sermon called Nandakovada Sutta by the Buddha. King of Lichchavis got up a residence for her and her followers at Visala now called Vesali

One day the Buddha accompanied by 80 Maha Arahants and a huge concourse of Bhikkhus visited pinnacled (Kutagara) hall in the city of Visala.

At such a sight Venerable Maha Pajapati Gotami was glad. The disciples were fully worthy of the Lord as He was of them. She saw that Añña Kondañña, Sāriputta, Mogallana, Khema Uppalawanna, Nanda, Rāhula and his mother Yasodhara (Bimba Devi) were to predecease the Lord. She was determined not to tarry but that she should be the first to go. Although she was 120 years old yet signs of old age were not visible. Her hair and teeth resemble those of a girl of 16 years. At the moment of her resolution of obtaining Pari Nibbana the earth trembled and quaked. The thunder in the sky rent the air. Her companions like-wise sought release.

She and her companions proceeded to meet the Lord. All the Maha Arahants were in full force. Compliments were exchanged. Although from the 7th day the prince was reared by her, the Buddha amply repaid the debt due to her by her ordination. She gave a graphic picture of the infancy of Prince Siddhattha. How she fed and bathed the prince.

In the meantime people from far and near flocked to the scene as the news spread. Diverse deities came. Visva Kamma deity who by his psychic power came to the rescue to provide much needed accommodation.

The Buddha requested Venerable Maha Pajapati Gotami to clear doubts about her sainthood. Then she paid tribute by performing many miraculous acts and all present including the Maha Arahants marvelled.

She and her companions underwent the great release. At last the cremation came to pass. The Lichchavi Princes brought Sandalwood for the funeral pyre and the caskets containing the remains were made ready. The whole sky was over-cast with the heavenly host during the day. The stars and

the moon shone brilliantly overhead as night followed. People laid carpets and the deities held a canopy overhead. It was a unique ceremony the Buddha and the Maha Arahants graced, So the pyre was lit and only the relics of Venerable Maha Pajapati Gotami remained like pearls and those of others vanished from the scene. These relics were placed in Buddha's bowl and given to Him. The Buddha extolled the virtues of this great Arahant He Himself had been her ordainer and teacher and this was said to dispel any doubts.

The Buddha got a Dagoba built by the Lichavi Princes and got the relics enshrined and the Buddha Himself joined the funeral procession. This was a unique honour paid by the Tathāgata.

The Buddha addressing the Monks and laity declared that Venerable Maha Pajapati Gotami was foremost in seniority among the Female Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

Mother unique none can gainsay
Nursing the August Babe.
Going far in the Aryan Way
Undying bliss thou got from Sage.

2. KHEMA

Signal services to five Buddhas

Her story dates back to Padumuttara Buddha. She was at that time a servant maid. She offered three pieces of appetising sweetmeat (Aggala) to the Buddha. Thereafter, she got her hair tresses cut and had it sold. With the proceeds she held an almsgiving. She aspired to be the chief Disciple. During the Dispensation of Vipassi Buddha, she listened to the Buddha's sermon and as a result she entered the Order. She was an able exponent of Dhamma. During the span of life which was 10000 years, she rendered signal services to the Dispensation by spreading the Dhamma far and wide. Thereafter to two of the Buddhas in succession Kakusanda and Kōṅganna while she was born in

wealthy families, she was able to offer shelter to the Buddhas acquiring much merit. Thereafter, in the Dispensation of Buddha Kassapa she was born as daughter to Kiki the king of Benares by the name of Samsari. She listened to the Buddha so ardently that she built and donated a magnificent Vihare to the Buddha.

In this Dispensation she was born in a princely family at Sagala by the name of Khema. The colour of her complexion was that of gold. She was beautiful. She married King Bimbisara of Kosala. She was reluctant however, to visit the Buddha for fear that the Blessed One would moralise on the fleeting nature of beauty.

Everytime she visited the temple she dodged meeting the Buddha. One day the king got his men to take her willy-nilly to the Buddha. On her arrival, the Buddha created a phantom of unsurpassing beauty to attend on Him. Khema was struck by her beauty. While she was thus engaged she felt that beauty could only beguile. The Buddha made the figure to go through youth middle age, old age and thereafter to extreme old age devoid of everything worthwhile. Beauty thus gave way to hideousness. It was a graphic picture. Khema understood the meaning and felt what was in store for her. Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta in other words transiency, sorrow and without any lasting entity called a soul.

To a mind thus prepared the Buddha preached. The seeds fell on good ground. She entered the stream of sainthood (Sotapanna). The Buddha illustrated. His sermon by bringing before her mind the lesson of the spider and the web. As soon as a fly strikes a web, the spider by the motion thus generated takes it as a signal and attacks by devouring the fly. This goes on. The spider became wedded to the web. So were the human beings wedded to passion and lust. Her mind saw all. She became an Arahant. She asked permission from the king for her ordination. The king, himself a budding saint, readily consented. One day god Mara in the guise of a young man tempted Khema. The man met with a rebuff. His discomfiture was complete. He took to flight. One night Khema thought

of visiting the Buddha. But the Buddha was with Sakka king of the gods. Rather than disturb the Buddha, Khema wheeled round in the air and dis-appeared.

Sakka on seeing the vision was soon enlightened of the matter by the Buddha.

The Buddha addressing the monks and the laity declared Khema was among the female disciples the most eminent for Wisdom.

Fair maid lost in thy beauty;
Was recued by the Great Sage.
Thy mind was keen as razor's edge;
Thou heard the call of Duty.

3. UPPALA - VANNA

The lotus blooms in the river.

For psychic power she was foremost among the female disciples of the Noble Order. Her past story takes us back to Padumuttara Buddha. She saw her counter part and the rest followed. She performed many a good deed. Thereafter she was born as a daughter to Kiki the king of Benares. She built a monastery for the bhikkhus. On her death she was born in the deva realm. Then again she was born as a poor woman due to some lapse on her part. She offered a large lotus flower sprinkling the same with perfume specially distilled with 500 roasted corn (pori) to a paccheka Buddha.

Then she thought that the lotus flower was useless to Buddha and took it back. She changed her mind again and returned the flower with the wish of having as many children as the number of roasted rice. Wherever she went the lotus flowers began to bloom. Paccheka Buddha made use of the flower as a door rug at the cave of Nānda-Mulaka in Himalayas. Thereafter, she was born in a deva realm. There, too, lotus flowers began to bloom wherever she went. On release from the deva realm, she was born again on this earth in a large flower. Birth according to the Buddha could only occur in 4 ways;

1. Twice born (Andaja) as in poultry crows or birds etc.
2. In the mother's womb (Dala-buja) as human beings and animals like cattle, deer etc from the mother's womb.
3. Due to moisture (San-sejatha) as in the case of worms etc.
4. Spontaneous birth (Opa-pathika) as in Deva and Brahma states and lower states like hell i.e. born as an adult with full faculties intact.

Padumawathie as she was afterwards called was born Opapathika. One day a hermit saw an unusual large flower in a pond. She decided to pluck it when to his amazement he was a female child wrapped in the flower. He took the child and nurtured her. There was no difficulty as milk began to ooze from one of her fingers to provide sustenance. She was left in the hut while the hermit was engaged in finding the where-withal in a near-by forest. In due course, a man, who had strayed into the forest, saw Padumawathie and his curiosity was roused. He waited for the return of the hermit who told him all about her under strict confidence. But the man was a busy body. He marked the return route by various signs on the way.

When he got back, he lost no time in unfolding the story to the king. The description of the girl moved the king. So with his staff and the informant, the king visited the hermit and persuaded him to part with the girl. The hermit consented on one condition. That the king would eventually make her the queen. But the others in the harem were enraged. They plotted and schemed. They spread stories that she was demoniac. There was proof that the king and his army had to leave the city to put down a rising in the remote corner of his kingdom.

In the meanwhile a notable event took place. Padumawathie so the story goes, gave birth to 500 babies. This was no doubt due to an aspiration in a former birth when doing a meritorious deed. The king's harem was aghast at this feat. Each one hid a babe in a box and in this manner the 500 babies were disposed of. Having substituted instead a wooden log they informed the

distressed mother to what she has given birth. Upon the king's return following his military success, he was told the false story and he was gullible enough to believe it. Padumawathie was driven away.

She met an elderly lady who gave her shelter. In the meanwhile the 500 women in the king's harem, for that was the strength of the harem, related to the king of their vow made to commemorate the king's success. The vow took the shape of offerings to the river god. So the 500 women took to the river each with the box containing the stolen baby. These boxes were thrown to the river and they got wedged by an obstruction in the river. These boxes were duly brought before the king. Sakka the king of the gods got himself busy. He got an inscription made on each of the boxes mentioning that these babies beginning from Maha Paduma Prince were the children of the king of Benares and Padumawathie was their mother. The king was furious. He offered 1000 gold coins as a reward and by beat of tom-tom, it was proclaimed that anyone who declared seeing Padumawathie would get the reward.

This reached the ears of her benefactress. She was unaware that her ward was no other than Padumawathie who urged her to claim the reward. After much reluctance she did so. The good lady on being questioned told the king's men that she has in her custody a person who could give information about Padumawathie. But the king's men instantly recognised their queen. She declined to go back in a chariot. But instead she preferred to walk decked in royal apparel. This was publicity snough. The crowds lined the road. The lotus flowers notwithstanding the carpet sprang up wherever she went. The king offered the 500 offending women to the queen as her slaves.

But the queen was generous. She got the king to revoke the order. Thus they regained their lost liberty. The queen gave each of the women a prince. Thus she won their affection. The queen took charge of the prince Mahā Paduma. One day all of them went to the river for sports. But their minds were bent on spiritual welfare. They were wonder-struck by the various stages of the lotus flowers. From the bud immersed in the water to the full blown flower on the surface and even to faded flower bereft of its beauty.

The thought struck them that their fate was no different. Their minds were developed in the direction and became Arahants. In fact they were greater. They were Pacceka Buddhas for their good Kamma was powerful. The news reached the king and queen. These Pacceka Buddhas went to the abode of Nandana lake in the Himalayas. The queen's sorrow was inconsolable. She died of a broken heart. She was born in a poor family at Rajagaha-modern Rajgir. She in due course married a craftsman.

One day she met 8 Pacceka Buddhas who were some of her sons in her former birth. She obtained her husband's consent to give alms. She invited them and they having consented said that all the Pacceka Buddhas would be seen by her. On the day set apart, all the 500 Pacceka Buddhas came. But she was unperturbed. The house became spacious by some miraculous power and all were able to be accommodated. Such was the power of these Buddhas. Food was likewise sufficient to go round all of them. She offered 8 blue lotus flowers to the original invitees of the Pacceka Buddhas in the hope and wish that wherever she would be born she would have a complexion like unto the lotus flower. She was born in the deva realm and subsequently in this Dispensation she was born in a wealthy family and was named after the lotus flower - Uppala - Vannā. When she came of age, proposals for marriage came from all quarters and the harassed father did not wish to offend any suitor by a refusal. To the father, ordination in the Noble Order was the only solution.

The daughter true to her destiny agreed. Upon being ordained she was kept in charge of the convocation room where the nuns assembled for the confession of lapses. She had to tend the lamps. She observed that the light was sustained by the wick and the oil. Sometimes the light goes out by going short of either or by a gust of wind. So life was due to kammic force. This kept her thinking till she became an Arahant. She remembered her former past lives.

A particular life struck her mind most forcibly. How she was married to a trader who had to go to distant places - an itinerant pedlar who had to be away for days. She became

pregnant. Her mother - in - law suspected her fidelity and she was driven away. She went to Rajagaha in search of her husband and on the way a handsome boy was born.

So she placed the child in the lodging house for vagrants and went to the near by well to get herself washed. In the meanwhile another trader came in and was drawn towards the foundling. He took the child away and adopted him as his own son. The distracted mother not seeing the child was grief stricken and she retreated to the place she started from. On her way she was accosted by a bandit thief who made her his wife. They lived as husband and wife.

One day a girl was born and due to some domestic quarrel and in consequence the child fell and her head was injured. The poor mother fearing a beating fled from the scene. Then her son who was adopted by the trader saw her and not knowing that she was her mother married her. Afterwards the same man married her own daughter by the robber. The husband and the two wives lived together, It is an unholy union brought about by ignorance.

One day the mother was examining the daughter's head for lice and the scar of her former injury was revealed. It was her own daughter's injury. She was horrified. She went to an āramaya and was ordained a nun. She saw how due to lust such horrible things took place and was filled with loathing and disgust. This was the story of her past. Perhaps modern society may furnish many such instances.

It was while living alone in a forest, a young shepherd named Nanda a kinsman of hers got infatuated with her and committed a sexual offence as soon as she returned from a round of alms. Coming from the noon day glare to the dark cave where her abode was, she could not see and hence she was taken by surprise despite her protests. He committed the dire deed and was immediately born in the hell (niraya) when the earth yawned and swallowed the foolish young man. He was however dead before the yawning of the earth.

It was after this incident the Blessed One prohibited the female disciples of the Noble Order to live in isolation in the forest.

Not long afterwards Buddha addressing the monks declared Uppala Vannā Mahā Theri was foremost for psychic power as Venerable Maha Mogallana was among the Mahā Arahants.

The child of the lotus, happily born,
Discovered though travel worn,
How life's torments were born,
Held power happily borne.

4. PATACARA

The water in the river was impounded to profitable use.

She was born in the royal family of the King Kiki of Kasi, in the Dispensation of Kassapa Buddha. The life span at that time was 20,000 years. She and her brothers built a monastery for the bhikkhus.

Thereafter, she was born in a Deva realm from which she was born in this Dispensation in a wealthy family at Sravasti. She was named Patachara. Parents found difficulty in keeping away the suitors. She was both wealthy and charming. A tower was built and she was confined there with a retinue of servants. She fell in love with a man-servant. On hearing of an arranged marriage, she eloped with her lover.

They went to a far off country and lived together. But it was a dreary existence as they had nothing to fall upon. She became, in due course, pregnant. She wished to go back to her parents. But the young man was naturally reluctant.

One day in desperation she left the young man and he joined her. But as they delayed a child was born on the way. They returned as it served no purpose. Again, for a second time she became pregnant and this time she meant business. She, hurried on with the child in arms in his absence and the husband followed her. Disaster overtook them. Peals of thunder were heard and there was lightening. Heavy showers of rain came down and they were at the mercy of the elements. Fear and

anxiety advanced the onset of pregnancy. She appealed to her husband to prepare a shelter. It was a hopeless task. The man, however, was determined to carry out the bidding. While setting about the job, he was stung fatally by a ferocious serpent who was in an ant-hill nearby. While she waited for the return of her husband, a male child was born to her in distress. They spent the night together and in the following morning she discovered the corpse of her husband. Feeling that she was the cause of his death, she was determined to seek her parents. But the river was swollen and it was dangerous to ford with the two little ones as she was very weak. She took the new born first and kept him concealed by some leaves and proceeded to go back to fetch the other child.

While in mid river she saw an eagle swooping on the new born child and flying away with the babe. She became frantic; she yelled and clapped. But the bird took no heed. The other who was watching at the other bank became excited and guessing that the mother was calling him, plunged into the river only to be carried away by the current. Thus she was left bereft of her husband and 2 children. Her grief was over-powering. She proceeded to her home town only to learn that her parents and brother had died because the house came down on them by the very rain that caused her all the misery and havoc and their funeral pyre was pointed out by the neighbours. So ended the tragic tale. Now her spiritual life was born from the crucible of anguish and death. She became distracted. She ran nude through the roads of Srawasti. Such a sight evoked merriment and jest among the young and the foolish. Stones were flung at her. She sought asylum at Jetawanarama where the Buddha was preaching. People including the deity at the gate tried to prevent her but the Buddha forbade them. She came before the all Compassionate Buddha. "Sister, regain your mindfulness" rang the words of the Compassionate One and the quiet words had a soothing effect. There was a gleam of hope when there was none before. She was crouching to hide her nakedness. For fear and shame became uppermost. A kind person in the crowd threw a shawl on her, to cover her nakedness. The Buddha addressed her further and the resolve that was made in the distant past, during the time of Padumuttara

Buddha ripened. She understood the nature of things. She ceased to be blind. She saw and was transformed. She became an Arahant.

One day while washing her feet she saw how the water flowed before being absorbed. The second day the water flowed still further while on the third day, the water flowed still further only to be absorbed in the ground. Concentrating on this she found how death was inevitable. Like absorption of water, so death.

The Buddha addressing monks and laity declared that Venerable Patācārā was foremost among his female disciples for the practice of discipline (Vinaya).

By a stroke she was bereaved,
Of all to whom she was dear;
Her agony was relieved
By the Sage making the Way clear.

5. DHAMMA DINNA

Signal services to five Buddhas

Her recorded career began when Padumuttara was Buddha. She offered a rice cake to Sugatha the Chief disciple after the seventh day of His trance during which he enjoyed the bliss of Nibbana (Nirodha Samāpatti). During the time of Buddha Pussa she was generous to a fault in giving alms. During the time when Kassapa was Buddha, she was born as a daughter to Kiki King of Kasi now Benares. She and her 6 brothers built a *pirivena* for the Bhikkhus.

During this Dispensation, she figured herself as the wife of Visaka the treasurer at Rajagaha. Visaka was a friend of Bimbisara, the king devoted to the Buddha. One day Visaka visited the Buddha in the company of king Bimbisara. He listened to a sermon and became a budding saint (Sota panna). On his return, he was a different individual. Strange did he appear to his wife. She inquired for the reasons. Then he confessed that his mind has undergone a transformation to something "rich and strange". Dhammadinna promptly asked for permission to go to Buddha.

Visakha cannot but consent. She was sent in a golden palanquin. She was ordained as a nun.

She felt that if she were to be unsuccessful in the life of Bikkhuni then her purpose of joining the Noble Order was in vain. How many monks think of this at the present day? She repaired to a solitary place and strove with might and main to obtain the fruits of Arahantship. Her past resolution with good kamma had the desired effect. She became an Arahant.

As such she visited the home town of Rajagaha so that she could be of service to her fellow creatures who knew her. The erstwhile husband did not understand. He thought that her mission was a failure and that she was returning empty handed. The husband plied her with questions and she deftly answered them. Finally he asked her about Nibbana. Here he was out of his depth. He was not so advanced. He was at sea with her answers. So she referred him to the Buddha who not only concurred but also extolled Dhamma Dinna for her learning—vide lesser Vedalla Sutta in the Majjhima Nikaya.

Not long afterwards the Buddha addressing the monks and laity declared that Venerable Dhammadinna was undoubtedly the foremost in expounding the Dhamma among the female disciples of the Noble Order.

Mastering the mind's disease,
Learning the Law with ease
She held her classes at Rajagaha
Profiting her mate Visakha.

6. SUNDARI NANDA

Beauty is but skin deep; she relied on undying beauty.

She was foremost for ever enjoying the bliss of Nibbana by going into a trance.

As the course of the Ganges could be traced to the Himalayas, even so her past spiritual history could be traced to the time when Padumuttara was Buddha. She saw her counter part and instantly resolved to be one. Till her ideal tree blossomed she watered and manured it by doing various good

deeds, until finally, she was born in this Dispensation as niece to Maha Pajapathi Gothami, the foster-mother of Buddha. Her name was Nanda. But an additional name was given to her to commemorate her personal beauty. She was known as Rupa or Sundari Nanda, As the sweet-heart of Nanda the step brother of Prince Siddhartha, she was also known as Janapada Kalyani. She was obsessed with her beauty. But Buddha was unconcerned by beauty as such.

In the passing show, in the round of re-births, it hardly counted. So she kept the Buddha at arms length. She avoided going to Jetawanarama hearing that her good looks are of no account. But when all her relations renounced the earthly glory for life in the Noble Order, she also followed suit. Prince Siddhattha and son Rahula, Nanda her fiancée, her aunt Maha Pajapathi Gotami, her cousin, Yasodhara, have forsaken home. So she ordained herself not out of faith but merely to be with them. She avoided the Buddha and instead she preferred to obtain advice by proxy. But the Buddha was unwilling. She was taught a lesson on impermanency when she visited the Buddha at last. In the same manner as was done to Khema the Buddha by psychic power created a beautiful woman and showed her in different stages of decay and decline. She was converted. She got rid of the defilements. She became an Arahant. Not long after-wards the Buddha addressing the monks and laity declared that bhikkhuni Rupa was foremost among the female disciples for realising the bliss of Nirvana by entering into a trance (Nirodha Samapatti) of the Noble Order.

The lover of Nanda, fair child,
For company she was a nun.
The Gentle Sage cured her mind,
She was basking in the sun.

7. SONA

"Labor omnia vincit" labour overcometh all obstacles.

She was foremost for indomitable energy among the female disciples of the Noble Order.

Her past history takes us back when Padumuttara was Buddha. She was at the time born in the city called Hansawatie. Many a good deed she did. She was born in this dispensation at Sravasti. Her parents called her Sona. In due course she married. But prolific was her progeny. She had 10 sons and a like number of daughters. She was ever dutiful and stood by them. They were given in marriage. But the children neglected their mother.

They did not even wish to regard her as their mother in her old age. She in disgust left her home. She obtained ordination as a Bhikkhuni. As she had many children she was known as Bahuputtika Sona. When she entered the aramaya her colleagues were no better than her children. They made things hot for her so that she may be compelled to leave the aramaya. But obstacles spurred her to succeed as a Bikkhuni. One day the inmates of the aramaya left for a journey bidding her to keep hot water ready on their return. She took no heed but spent the time in meditation. She soon realised the Four Aryan Truths.

Soon after she became an Arahant, in order to prevent her colleagues from committing demerit by scolding her, got the water in a vessel heated by her psychic power. They were alarmed and sued for peace.

She was numbered among the female Maha Arahants and was preeminent for the display of marked energy.

She pursued a will o' the wisp;
Her circle was a thorn.
To the highest state he was borne
The law fell into her grip.

8. SAKULA

The light shone so was her insight.

Her story dates from Padumuttara Buddha. She saw her counterpart and forthwith fixed upon the ideal. To that end she had lamps lit. She loved to illuminate to dispel darkness.

Ultimately, during the Dispensation of Kassapa Buddha, she was born in a Brahmin's family. She became a nun. She collected oil and lit lamps before the stupa built in memory of Kassapa Buddha. She was born, thereafter, in a deva realm. Again in this Dispensation she was born in a Brahmin's family and was called Sakula. She was a devoted lay woman (Upasikawa) Ever and anon the ideal was before her. She listened to a sermon by an Arahant. She was filled with disgust for the life of a lay person. She became a nun and not long afterwards with due exertion she became an Arahant.

The Buddha addressing the monks and the laity declared that Sakula was pre-eminent among the female disciples of the Noble Order for supernatural vision.

Greater than any in the Order.
She could see further and further.
She was always born in the light;
Lamps were lit to obtain sight.

9 BHADDA - KUNDALAKESI

The stone became smooth buffeted by the waves of the sea.

She too, started her career during the dispensation of Padumuttara Buddha. She saw her counter part. She gave alms and aspired for the fulfilment of her wish. After a lapse of years, she was born as a daughter to King Kiki of Benares during the dispensation of Kassapa Buddha. Twenty thousand years was the allotted span of life. She became a nun along with her sisters.

They together built a monastery. Thereafter after many years in deva realm During this Dispensation, she was born in a treasurer's family at Rajagaha and was named Bhadda. On the same day of her birth, to the king's councillor (Purohitha) a son was born, and the weapons of the king's armoury shone. On the following morning when the councillor as usual came to the palace the king informed him of the incident and inquired for the cause. The councillor informed the king that not only the king's armoury but also the weapons elsewhere in the city shone during the same night-wide stretch 76).

The Councillor informed the king that the birth of his son was the cause. Further, according to the astrological forecast, he would be a first class robber but would not be a danger to the king. The king did not give his assent to his proposal of putting an end to the life of the newcomer who was named Satthuka. The child was a born kleptomaniac. From an early age he started robbing. The father tried in various ways to wear off this habit but in vain. At last the father did not wish to harbour a robber at home. So he gave him the equipment necessary for his livelihood and sent him away. Satthuka in due course, became a noted robber. He became as prominent as "Robinhood of England" or "Sardiel of Ceylon".

The king was furious to learn that his men were power less to arrest the robber. One day he sent for the Police chief and questioned him. It was the usual story. He denied having seen the robber. But the king sternly commanded him to arrest the robber, failing which he would be met with condign punishment. The threat answered. For the King would keep his word. So the robber was arrested.

According to the custom the robber was taken round the city with the beating of tom tom giving due publicity to the execution, with the crowds thronging round the central figure, the robber. The route taken was by Bhadda's palace. Bhadda saw the robber and there was love at first sight.

Her parents were duly informed of her infatuation. They did their utmost to wean her of her desire but in vain. She longed to die. The parent's fondness for the child overrode the

reluctance to give permission. Money played the part to bribe the officers to release the prisoner and sacrifice another instead. Thus Satthuka was saved from an ignominious end. Bhadda was duly married to the erstwhile robber. It was the culmination of a woman's infatuation. Just as a leopard cannot change his spots so a robber cannot change his habit of thieving. One day, the robber suddenly appeared to be sad. The wife inquired for the reason. The robber replied that one matter is causing him concern. He was unable to fulfill the vow he has taken when he was sentenced to death. His wife readily agreed to fulfil the vow unsuspecting the motives of the robber. His dutiful wife made preparations and they both went to a certain mountain top. The robber insisting that no others should accompany them and that she is fully decked with all the jewellery she possessed. It was a well planned plot to rob and kill her. At the mountain top the robber revealed his intentions. But she kept her presence of mind. She instantly resolved upon a plan of action to meet the crisis. She readily agreed to abide by the robber's decision if only he would grant her a boon. The robber was flattered to hear that it was only to pay her last respects to him before her death. The robber agreed. She pretended to be amorous. She cried and lamented and wordsipped him. She displayed to advantage all the viles and arts of women. The robber was taken unawares and she going behind him heaved a mighty heave and with a final jerk suddenly pushed him with every ounce of her energy down the precipice. It was a nemesis with a vengeance as the body of the robber went hurtling down the hill striking one crag after another. The deity of the place acclaimed the heroic act of Bhadda with a verse. It was not always the man who could be cleverer or wiser. The women also could be cleverer and wiser. In this instance the woman got the better of man. She felt that going alone with all the jewellery is fraught with danger to her life. She was wise. She could not face her parents. So she left the jewellery behind and went alone robbing herself and shaving her head as a nun. She was known thereafter as "curly haired", or "Kundala Kesa" as there were curls of hair in due course. She was proficient in Vedas but found no satisfaction in the knowledge. She entered the order of the white robed Niganthas. She became a great debater and went from place to place debating. Her "modus operandi" is

to plant a mango branch challenging anyone who takes it away, to a public debate, She was able to vanquish her opponents one by one. When finally she came near Jetawanaramaya and planted a mango branch in a near by sand heap one day Venerable Sariputta came across it and got some boys to take it away. She hearing about it challenged the elder to a public debate. Crowds thronged. Thera asked her to put whatsoever questions she wished. Thera answered all the questions put by her.

When Thera's turn came, he put only one questions which stumped her. It was a well known question which was put first to a Novice (Samanera) on ordination. It is followed by nine other questions. They are therefore called Samanera or (Kumara) questions.

"Eka nama-kin" viz, what is that one thing which has a universal application, was the question. The answer is that all beings depend on food for living. Kundala Kesa was at a loss for an answer. She confessed ignorance and wanted to follow the elder. The Thera informed her that one greater than he, the Blessed One was presently sojourning at Jetavanarama and asked her to follow Him. She took his advice - She went to Jetavanarama. The Buddha was discoursing to the monks. He saw Kundali Kesa fully grown in wisdom. So she learnt from the Blessed One that it was far better to concentrate on one verse, replete with meaning and abide by it rather than learn 1000 verses aimlessly with out knowing the meaning.- Vide verses 102 and 103 of the Dhammapada She was duly ordained a Nun. Not long afterwards she became an Arahant. As long as she was not free of defilements when she was outside the Noble Order so long she was debtor to people for alms received. It is different now. Any gift to a Maha Arahant confers manifold gain to the giver.

The Buddha addressing the bikkhus and laity declared that Bhadda Kundali - kesa was foremost for Higher Knowledge (Abhinna) among the female Maha Arahants of the Noble Order.

Got the better of the robber;
With tufts of hair on head
She wandered to meet her teacher
Who referred her to the Head.

10. BHADDA KAPILANI

"She could remember the past like turning over the pages of a book"

The Buddha addressing the monks and the laity declared that she was foremost to remember in succession the past lives among the female disciples of the Noble Order.

She, too, started her career when Padumuttara was Buddha. She saw her counterpart and she immediately resolved to be one in a future dispensation of a Buddha. She gave alms to that end and received the assurance from the Buddha. She heaped up merit in birth after birth.

Her marriage with elder Kassapa was unique. She was known in this Dispensation as the Bhadda Kapilani and her fiancée as Pippali. Each hailed from wealthy and influential families. The young lad who was only 20 years of age was pestered by the parents to marry. He was yearning to be a hermit. To escape their importunity, he hit upon a plan. He got a statue made of gold after his own heart to represent his sweet heart and announced to the parents that if they succeed to get a woman resembling the statue, she would marry but not otherwise. The parents, nothing daunted, selected 8 Brahmins and providing them with a carriage and placing the statue in their hands, they were told to find a bride resembling the statue. They came to the city called Sagala in Madura. They kept the statue leaning on a tree near a bathing place. One day the nurse sent Bhadda Kapilani earlier to bathe and followed. Mistaking the statue for her, she was angry for her apparent disobedience and smacked the cheek. To her utter surprise the palm of her hand smarted by the blow. Brahmins who were watching decided that their mission was a success. They arranged the marriage. Before the happy event both parties wrote to each other. They were by no means love letters. Each was warning the other not to get disappointed as each was contemplating a hermit's life. The messengers met half way and impelled by curiosity they saw the contents and destroyed the letters. They returned home. Needless to say that marriage was never consummated. They went out together disguised as recluses. However, they were recognised by their

employees. He issued a pardon to the slaves. That was their last act. Proceeding further they were not immune from sarcastic remarks from the onlookers. They decided to part company. That was the snapping of the ancient bond that existed for countless ages. They were an inseparable pair for many ages. It was too much for even the meek earth which trembled Blessed One at Jetavanarama heard and understood the phenomenon. The Buddha proceeded to meet the elder Kassapa. Vide sketch 4 Bhadda Kapilani had to wait for the coming of the Order of the Nuns under the leadership of Maha Prajapathi Gotami. She sojourned at Tithitarama near Jetavanarama.

She in no long time became a Maha Arahant.

Lord's heir was her mate
On paper. Useless to wait.
The earth shook on the parting;
The Lord coming for the meeting.

11. BHADDA KACCANA

She delved deep into the past

She was foremost among the female Maha Arahants of the Noble Order for the ability to see far into the past.

There were only four who achieved this distinction of delving into the past for 100,000 kalpas. Besides herself the two chief disciples and the elder Bakkula Thera are the four.

Her past career began when Padumuttara was the Buddha. As soon as she came across her counter part she resolved to fulfil the role. She directed with might and main all her energies in this one direction. She did many a good thing. Ultimately she was born in this dispensation as a daughter to the Sakkyan King called Suppabuddha She was named Yasodhara. She was also known as Bimba Devi so named after the rosy complexion also Rahula Mata.

She married Prince Siddhatta and to them prince Rahula was born. For that reason she was also known as Rahula Mata. Prince Siddhatta was afterwards to become Gautama Buddha and Rahula became a Maha Arahant. She joined the order of the Nuns headed by Maha Pajapati Gotami. From that time onwards she was known as Bhadda Kaccana.

Great as mother and wife,
Sustaining Rahula's life.
Revealed to her the mighty past
Singled for the giant's task.

12. KISA GOTAMI

Death was to her a teacher.

She was foremost among the female Maha Arahants of the Noble Order, for the ability to wear rough robes.

We first come across her during the Dispensation of Padumuttara Buddha. She saw her like and immediately resolved to follow her in her footsteps. She gave alms, and practised meditation. She was born in deva realms.

She was born in this Dispensation in a poor family. She duly married. But people took no notice of her. She was lean and hence she was called Kisa. Hence her own name Gotami was linked with Kisa and was known as Kisa Gotami. When a son was born to her she became popular. As soon as child came to an endearable age he died.

The prop on which she was leaning was suddenly removed. Attachment made her blind. She could not believe he was dead. So with the dead child in her arms she roamed for a medicine for his recovery.

She was laughed unto scorn. She was agitated beyond measure. She was nearly going mad.

One day a good Samaritan pointed the way to Jetawanarama, where the Buddha was residing. When she went, the Buddha was discoursing to the monks and she stood at the end of the hall and entreated the Lord for the medicine that she had hitherto sought in vain. The Buddha saw her future. The Buddha saw that she was a stranger to Death. So the Blessed One asked her to bring some mustard seed. She felt that her child would recover soon and was about to set forth for the mustard. "But tarry a little," the Buddha added, "that mustard seed must be brought from a house meaning clan that has not tasted death".

However, she thought it was simple enough. But she was on a voyage of discovery. Once again the spectacle of the distraught mother with the corpse of the child in her arms was parading in the streets of Sravasti. The much sought after mustard was readily available in every home perhaps but alas! not the particular seeds the Buddha wanted. There was no visitor so frequent as death. The truth gradually dawned on her about the universality of death. The force of death overwhelmed her. She saw that the Buddha wanted to teach her the Great Lesson. She hurriedly took the corpse to the cemetery and kept it there remarking that he was not the only child to die. Her practice of meditation in the past, came to her rescue. It was not difficult for her to realise that nothing endureth for ever. It was so in all planes of life, not excepting the Brahma World. Only an Arahant passes away completely never to be born again or to die again. She glimpsed that bliss. She returned a sadder and wiser woman. She no longer sought the medicine. She yearned for the higher prescription that would cure her once and for all.

She begged of the Great Physician to minister to her mind diseased. The Buddha's diagnosis was incomparable. The Buddha preached. There were four powerful currents (Oga) that would hurl mortals to and fro in the ocean of Sansara.

1. Carnal pleasures (Kama)
2. Clinging to existence (bava)
3. Attachment to various wrong beliefs (ditthi)
4. Ignorance. (Avijja)

Kisa Gotami grasped the Truth which ordinary mortals fail to understand. The Buddha, further, acknowledged that a person who lives realising the supreme bliss even for one day was nobler by far than one who lives a century blinded by ignorance. Vide verse 114 of the Dhammapada.

To her Death was a stranger,
When she met the Great Teacher.
To get death-less mustard seed,
Universal sorrow was her meed.

13. SIGALAKAMATA

Faith was the prerequisite of her Arahantship.

She was foremost among the female Maha Arahants of the Noble Order for the exercise of faith.

Her career began when Padumuttara was Buddha. She met with her counterpart and resolved with might and main to be one. She gave alms and aspired to be such a Bikkhuni. The Buddha also assured her she would be one. She gave alms. She practised morality and meditated. Being a long time in deva realm she was born in a Treasurer's family and was duly married to a person of equal status. A son was born and he was named Sigalaka. For that reason she was known as mother of Sigalaka (Sigalaka Mata). She was full of faith. She in her ardour of her Faith got herself ordained as a Bhikkuni and constantly gazed at the Buddha. As her Faith was so abundant, the Buddha found no difficulty in making her a devoted student. She got rid of her difilements and became a Maha Arahant.

It was Faith that made her a nun.
In the hierarchy she was one.
As becomes her past ideal;
Her steady aim has become real.

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*“Wherever the Buddha’s teachings have
flourished,
either in cities or countrysides,
people would gain inconceivable benefits.
The land and people would be enveloped in peace.
The sun and moon will shine clear and bright.
Wind and rain would appear accordingly,
and there will be no disasters.
Nations would be prosperous
and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons.
People would abide by morality and accord with
laws.
They would be courteous and humble,
and everyone would be content without injustices.
There would be no thefts or violence.
The strong would not dominate the weak
and everyone would get their fair share.”*

~ THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF
THE INFINITE LIFE SUTRA OF
ADORNMENT, PURITY, EQUALITY
AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF
THE MAHAYANA SCHOOL ~

With bad advisors forever left behind,
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of
Limitless Light!

~The Vows of Samantabhadra~

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exception these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all beings.

~The Vows of Samantabhadra
Avatamsaka Sutra~

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA

南無阿彌陀佛

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DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit that we have
accumulated from this Dharma
when practicing it, be dedicated
upon the Day of the Great Merit,
and may all the beings in the
three worlds be reborn in the Pure Land.

May those who are in lower realms
generally be reborn

and their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA

南無阿彌陀佛

中華民國八十二年四月十五日

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